

# The Icelandic Canadian

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## THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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## Editorial

# CHANGE IN PERSONNEL AND THE FUTURE

Every once in a while there are bound to be changes in the personnel of the Committee which is in charge of this magazine. There are two reasons for this. In the first place this is a voluntary organization. With two exceptions in the past, and aside from the honorarium voted to the Business and Circulation Manager at the end of each year, a practice invoked a few years ago, no one is paid for his or her services. The result is that members of the staff must attend to their own work and their personal interests first and hence may have to discontinue this particular gratuitous service.

Then again, the magazine is the official publication of the Icelandic Canadian club. The duty which falls upon the staff of the magazine, because of that relationship, is discussed below, but that very relationship, if it is to be real, demands that the members of the club be heard both in regard to the basis upon which the magazine staff is selected and in regard to the election of personnel as vacancies or changes arise from time to time.

In 1946 there was a considerable change in personnel in that five members resigned and five others were elected to fill their places. At that time an editorial appeared in the ensuing issue of the magazine, thanking the retiring members for their services and introducing the new members. At that time comment was made on the readiness with which vacancies were filled. This time there is a change of more than the casual type and a similar editorial would appear to be in order.

Two members of the Committee could not see their way clear to continue. Their place had to be filled and in accordance with a resolution passed at the annual meeting of the Icelandic Canadian Club, four new members were to be added to the Committee and the members of the old Committee, who were willing to carry on, together with the four new members would constitute the Magazine Committee for the coming year. The directions of the club have been carried out. At the annual meeting three of the new members were elected and the incoming Magazine Committee was authorized to appoint the fourth one.

According to plans decided when the Leif Eirikson club was being organized, a nominee of that organization is to be added to the staff. The President, Dr. Gestur Kristjansson, has moved to North Dakota and the selection may be deferred until the club reconvenes this fall.

## APPRECIATION OF SERVICES RENDERED

On an occasion such as this when the continuing members of the staff unreservedly express their appreciation to the members who are retiring it is well to let our minds wander back to the fall of 1942 when the magazine came into existence. This is the most fitting because one of the retiring members was on the staff from the very beginning.

It is impossible to look back to the beginning without paying tribute to the first editor, Mrs. Laura Goodman.

Salverson. This was a new adventure and one not without its hazards. But all those whom Mrs. Salverson associated with her, had confidence in her and readily acknowledged her primacy in the field of letters and in the qualifications required for taking the lead in embarking upon this new enterprise.

Even the thought of such an adventure received immediate encouragement in the Icelandic community. At this moment of reminiscence it seems appropriate to quote a little poem which appeared as a frontispiece to the first number, written by Dr. Sig. Júl. Johannesson, who has been a strong supporter of the magazine ever since. Here is the little gem:

### HELLO!

Hello!—If you hear I am knocking,

I hope you will open the door:

"Who are you?"—I knew you would ask me,

You never have seen me before.

Who am I?—As yet I am no one

To somebody hoping to grow.

Today is my very first birthday,

I am starting by saying hello.

"Oh!—What is your mission?" you ask me,

I'll tell you with juvenile pride,

For I am not timid nor bashful;

Why should I? There's nothing to hide.

Believe me: I'm coming to serve you

As nobody served you before,

By adding some life to your living —

I hope you will open the door.

One of the members retiring this year is **Mrs. Grace Thorsteinson**, (nee Reykdal) who took a prominent part in launching this project. She accepted

the responsibility of the office of Business Manager. There were no subscribers, no advertisers, no money in the bank. Only those who were on the staff at the beginning know the amount of time and energy Grace spent in soliciting advertising and collecting accounts. In the first number there were eight pages of advertising almost all of which was obtained by Grace.

Mrs. Thorsteinson continued as Business Manager for ten years and a year ago relinquished that post but served on the News Staff until her retirement this spring.

**Mrs. Holmfridur Danielson** joined the Magazine Committee in 1946 and at first was Editorial Secretary, in which capacity she served until in the fall of 1947 when she was elected Chairman of the Editorial Board, which position she held until the end of June 1953.

Fríða Danielson was one of the most indefatigable workers during the seven years she was on the Magazine Committee. Her interest in the magazine seemed boundless, and it is worthy of note that she was a contributor before she joined the staff. Back in 1943 she wrote an article which she called "Amphitheatre of Democracy". A short time before she had visited Iceland and at Thingvellir "all at once the Plain is peopled with glamorous figures enacting the intriguing dramas of the saga age". It has been said that anything that can be enjoyed reading years after it was written is literature. The picture which Holmfridur paints of her "mental vision", as she gazes on Thingvellir, is a pleasure to read now, ten years later.

In her last contribution to the magazine, "An Experiment in Education",

Mrs. Danielson very appropriately selects Mr. G. B. Gunlogson as one, who by giving two hundred acres of land to the University and Agricultural College of North Dakota, has clearly seen the need of combining in education an understanding of the processes of living nature as well as the behavior of the human being.

To these co-workers we say: "Thank You", and we know that all the readers of the magazine concur.

### WELCOME BACK

Two former members of the Magazine Committee are with us again and we welcome them back.

Mrs. Helen Sigurdson is one of the originals. She became the Literary Editor, a position for which she is eminently qualified. Later her duties were enlarged to include book reviewing, an assignment she continued for some time after other duties had compelled her to resign from the Board.

Axel Vopnfjord joined the Editorial Board in March, 1946, and served until June 1948. During that time he wrote a number of substantial and well written editorials which clearly established his qualification for the position on the Magazine Committee which he now occupies. Once it became known that he could be prevailed upon to accept the chairmanship of the Editorial Board it was unanimously tendered to him.

### THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE STAFF

Dr. Ingolfur Gilbert Arnason is a newcomer on the Board but is not entirely unknown to the readers of the magazine. He is a teacher by profession and at present is Principal of

Mulvey School. He holds a B.A. and an M.A. degree from the University of Manitoba and in 1951 the University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. His doctoral thesis was entitled: "A Survey of the Micro-Crustacea of Manitoba, and a study of the Feeding of Lake Winnipeg Tullibees". In an article published in the magazine, (vol. 10, no. 4) Dr. Arnason gave the life history of a parasite which is carried in the body of a tiny water flea on which the tullibee feeds and thus becomes infected. Lake Winnipeg fishermen and others will welcome further studies by Dr. Arnason on this infestation which is such a heavy economic loss to the fishing industry of Manitoba.

Arthur Meighen Reykdal is a promising young man who has a very definite bent to writing, and as soon as the exuberance of youth is more cautiously channeled, should in course of time make a valuable contribution to present day literature, both poetry and prose. Indeed he has already made a start. In 1949 The Icelandic Celebration Committee offered a prize of \$50 for the best Toast to Canada. There were seven contestants and Art won the prize. This is the last verse:

There's a vision of Utopia before the  
dreamers' eyes  
Where the universe is moulded to an  
earthly paradise;  
Where the thunder of the cannon has  
been stilled forevermore  
And humanity has banished the insan-  
ities of war;  
Where all nations stand together under  
one vast flag unfurled . . .  
Utopia is Canada, the union of the  
World.



## THE FUTURE

Although there are always regrets when members of the staff leave after years of great service, still in the very change, or rather in the promptness with which vacancies are filled, there is encouragement for the future of the magazine. People approached are willing to serve, in this gratuitous way, for the magazine, for the Club and for the Icelandic Canadian and American people in general. That readiness has an even greater significance. It reflects the general consensus of opinion that there is a very definite need for a publication of this type.

It has already been stated that the magazine is the official mouthpiece of The Icelandic Canadian Club. Both of them, one through the written word and the other in its activities, endeavor to reach out to a small ethnic group in various stages of integration on this continent. In Icelandic we call ourselves Vestur-Íslendingar, a word that has no recognized English equivalent. The field is very wide and stark realities dictate that if it is to be covered English must be the medium of expression.

But that choice does not lessen our frank and open recognition of the need of organizations and publications where Icelandic is the medium of expression. These co-existing, one might say, sister institutions have courage-

ously and with credit clung to Icelandic, the language of our parents and grandparents.

So also the sponsors of this magazine recognize the need of clubs such as The Leif Eirikson club, who seek to reach the young people and must conduct their affairs in English as so few of them speak or even understand Icelandic.

If the magazine is to mirror the thoughts and feelings and, though in but a fragmentary way, record the struggles and achievements of this small and widely scattered national unit, seemingly diverse in thought and action, yet permeated with a spirit which neither time nor environment can uproot, it is better, perhaps necessary, that the magazine staff should be representative of the same wide range.

That is just what has happened this time. The range varies from an outlook mainly Icelandic to one almost entirely Canadian. In age the range is from the twenties to the writer who is over sixty-five.

On the staff of The Icelandic Canadian rests a heavy responsibility. Representative as it is of the various elements comprising the Icelandic group, and under the leadership of a chairman of Axel Vopnfjord's calibre and experience it should discharge that responsibility with credit and with honour.

**W. J. Lindal**



# THE FRONT COVER

The magazine Committee has decided, at least for the time being, to discontinue the "Special Features" on the front cover. On the other hand an index, in reasonable detail, will appear on the first page of the magazine proper, followed by a statement in regard to the magazine personnel, instructions to correspondents and the subscription rates.

Some magazines such as Time and Saturday Night of Toronto carry photographs of prominent people. This is costly and selections might be open to criticism and charges of discrimination. Something, however, should be drawn to the attention of readers, so instead of a picture why not a gem of poetry or words of wisdom in striking prose?

It has occurred to the Committee that if a choice verse from one of our best Icelandic poems appeared on the front cover it might provide a glimpse into the thoughts and feelings of our leading poets who in turn give expression to the finest in our people.

The selections will be either translations from originals in Icelandic, composed here or in Iceland, or originals composed in English by people of Icelandic descent.

Constructive criticism of this innovation and any other suggestions are welcome.

° ° °

The first front cover selection is from a group of poems by Stephan G. Stephansson, which he calls in Icelandic, "Á ferð og flugi", freely translated into English, "Musing en Route".

As the poet muses his mind goes back to the homeland; his thoughts are as a voice calling to him and they give him strength in life's struggle in this his foster land.

The Editorial Board is doubly happy in selecting this translation: this year is the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the author; the translation is by Dr. Watson Kirkconnell whose address at this year's Icelandic Celebration in Gimli is the leading article in this number of the magazine. It will be noted that Dr. Kirkconnell retains the alliteration as well as the exact metre in the original poem. It is not out of the way to repeat the original:

Til framandi landa eg bróðurhug ber,  
þar brestur á viðkvæmnin ein,  
en ættjarðar-böndum mig grípur hver  
grund,  
sem grær kring um Íslendinga bein.  
Eg skil, hví vort heimaland hjartfólgna  
ast er  
Öll höppin og ólánið það,  
sem ættkvísl þín beið, rifjar upp fyrir  
þér  
hver árhvammur, fjallströnd og vað,  
og það er sem holtin sjálf hleypi í  
mann þrótt  
þar hreystiraun einhver var drýgð;  
og svo er sem mold sú sé manni þó  
skyld  
sem mæðrum og feðrum er vígð.

Any further comment here on the author or the translator would be waste effort as no preface is needed to Dr. Kirkconnell's address or what is said about these men in this issue.

## *Stephan G. Stephansson and North America*

(An address by WATSON KIRKCONNELL, O.P.R., M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., D.P.Ec., LL.D., F.R.S.C., president of Acadia University, given at Gimli, Manitoba, August 3, 1953.)

Mr. Chairman, Guests of Honour, Maid of the Mountain, Venerable Pioneers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I feel it a high honour to be invited here to pay my tribute to a great man—at once a great Icelander and a great Canadian.

It is over thirty years since I first settled in Winnipeg and joined the staff of Wesley College. It was my first contact with the Icelandic tradition. Skuli Johnson and Olaf Anderson were my colleagues. Jón and Hrefna Bildfell, Einar Einarsson, Vilhjálmur Kristjánsson, Grettir Leo Jóhannsson, Beatrice Gíslason and many other young Icelanders were among my pupils. Icelandic, at the college level, was taught in our classroom. It is small wonder that as the years passed by I came to have respect and affection for Icelandic literature, both east and west of the ocean, and for the indomitable people whose spirit is expressed in its intricate measures. And in this literature I encountered the remarkable personality of Stephan G. Stephansson. I never met him in the flesh. Though he lived for five years after I reached Winnipeg, my contact with the Icelandic community was still very tenuous and our orbits never intersected. I must speak of him therefore only as I have known him through his published prose and verse.

We have met this day to pay tribute to a great man, one of the greatest men that Canada has produced.

And yet here I must check myself, for in the truest sense it was not Canada, but Iceland, that produced Stephan G. Stephansson. It was not at Markerville, Alberta, but on a small farm named Kirkjuhóll, in the parish of Skagafjörður, on the north coast of Iceland, that he was born one hundred years ago. It was not in Canada but in Iceland that he spent the first twenty years of his life—the formative years of nurture and education during which the granite of his character was chiselled into the shape that was to remain unchanged for the rest of his days. Neither should we forget that for the next sixteen years, from the age of twenty to the age of thirty-six, he lived, not in Canada but in the United States; it was in Wisconsin that he married an Icelandic bride, Helga Jónsdóttir, and begat his first children; and it was with a group of Dakotan settlers that he finally moved to a new pioneering enterprise in Alberta, about eighty miles north of Calgary. Although almost exactly half of Stephan G.'s life was spent in Canada, we cannot assume that one-half of its significance was absorbed from its Canadian setting. As will have been made abundantly clear by others here this day, his mind and character were quarried in youth out of the racial stock and the intellectual tradition of his native Iceland, and all through life he continued to saturate his soul with the literature, mythology and

history of the Norse world. His children and grandchildren might grow up with a North American consciousness, Canadians formed without a struggle in the mental and spiritual climate of this country. But Stephan G. remained that ever-tragic type, so common in our history, a grown man transplanted to a strange land in the prime of his powers and incapable, by the very strength of his nature, of merging freely into the traditions of his adopted country. Hence, when he sought to express himself with the pen, he had recourse, by choice and compulsion, to the language of his heart; he wrote in Icelandic, not English.

I have been asked to speak today of the relations of Stephan G. Stephansson to the New World. But to understand those relations, we need to view him in a wider setting of human adjustment. His is the story of a highly gifted immigrant coming "west of the ocean" and coming in contact with the dynamic, if somewhat chaotic, pioneer life of the American and Canadian West. But we need to dig deeper. What sort of man was this? By what forces had his nature been shaped in his native Iceland? And what was the character of the North American community with which he came in contact?

At the outset we may note that he was brought up in a land of "plain living and high thinking". Poverty cramped his youth; his parents were unable to give him more than the training of the elementary school; and the lean farm on which he was born has long since been abandoned and turned back to the wilderness. Yet his was a race among whom the humblest farmer or fisherman might be expected to compose good verses,

a land that had been settled by the freedom-loving poets of the age of Harald Fair, a land that in saga days had sent a continual swarm of poets forth to do the "grand tour" of the courts of the Scandinavian world. Poetry was certainly within the grasp of the humble farmer's son. His parents, though poor, had keen intelligence and cultural interests. He had, moreover, other hereditary grounds for self-confidence. Was he not related, on his father's side, to the provost of the diocese of Holar? And was he not a kinsman of the famous poet, Benedikt Gröndal? As every French soldier, in Napoleon's day, was said to carry a marshal's baton in his knapsack, might not the young Stephan G. feel that he, too, had in him the capacity for high poetic utterance, in keeping with his gifted kinfolk?

In estimating the set and temperament of his youth, one must remember also that the period from his birth until his emigration in 1873 was marked by bitter conflict between Icelandic national feeling and the efforts of the Danish monarchy and parliament to keep the island in a state of ignominious subjection. From 1870 onward tens of thousands of Icelanders fled from their ancient homeland to the New World, partly through economic improverishment and partly to avoid the tyranny of far-off Denmark. When the occasion for a millennial celebration in 1874 came over the horizon, one farmer proposed that this festival should take the form of a day of national mourning and of public farewell to an emigrating people. The early months of 1873 were marked by public demonstrations in Reykjavik against the representative of the Danish crown. It was amid scenes of this



sort that Stephan G. Stephansson set sail for America, resolved not merely to achieve economic independence but to enjoy a life of political freedom. The three previous years had indeed been spent as a farm hand in one of the poorest districts of northeast Iceland, but the pressure of alien rule in his youth had helped to intensify a rebellious spirit of freedom.

In the New World, however, he had still to endure hardness. Arriving with empty hands, he first hired out as a day labourer near Milwaukee. After hoarding his wages for a year, he felt ready to strike out as a pioneer settler in Shawano County, Wisconsin; and here he married and began to establish a family. Six years later, in 1880, he started all over again in Pembina County, North Dakota, and toiled from dawn to dark for nine long years. Still dogged by poverty and in search of wider horizons, he then began pioneer life for the third time, locating in a new settlement, eighty miles north of Calgary and seventy miles from the nearest post office. But the soil was good and unremitting toil for the next three decades brought his family a measure of prosperity.

In view of this long record of labour and hardship, it is not surprising that he viewed the economic system of his time with a critical eye. In an era of almost uncontrolled economic exploitation (1874-1890) he saw fabulous fortunes made by slick urban speculators and manipulators, while the very survival of the pioneer farmer was jeopardized by dishonest fluctuations in the national and international markets. By background and calling he might be a frontier farmer, but he was a frontier farmer with a first class brain—and that brain condemned

graft and corruption wherever he saw them. He had an almost automatic sympathy for the under-dog, no matter who he might be, in the economic, the social or the political world.

Hence it was that from the earliest of his published work, he gained the reputation of being a radical. In 1888, while still in the Pembina County settlement, he joined with others in founding an Icelandic Cultural Society (Menningarfélag), modelled after a similar group established by Felix Adler in New York. Its dominant slogans were "Humanity, Research and Liberty"; and in such a cause we find young Stephan lecturing enthusiastically on Robert G. Ingersoll. In May, 1890, he writes to Sveinn Björnson at great length, analysing the content and editorial quality of some fifteen radical periodicals in the United States, ranging from **The Free-thinker's Magazine** of Buffalo, N. Y. to **The Individualist** of Denver, Colorado. These represent in fact the range of his social sympathy. On the one hand he never ceased to condemn capitalist exploitation and to espouse the cause of the labouring class, with frank expressions of socialist intent; on the other hand, as a life-long pioneer farmer, building up an independent competence for himself and his family, he was an incorrigible individualist. As he clearly stated in his letters, he never took his stand with any political group or adopted any party program. The biting quality of his comment was clear enough, however. In a letter to Jónas Hall, written in 1889, soon after his arrival in Alberta, he remarks: "There are no politics here. Sir John and the C.P.R. rule here like God Almighty, without anyone perceiving it". Years later, in January 1918, he was



to pay tribute to Sir Wilfred Laurier: "He was and is the fairest and most idealistic statesman 'of the old school' in Canada, resembling Gladstone in many ways."

His attitude towards war was one of frank abhorrence, and got him into trouble more than once. At the time of the Boer War, for example, he aligned himself with the little Dutch community of South Africa and in his powerful poem "The Transvaal" attacked the British Empire for what he considered to be its oppression of the small and the weak. During the First World War he was even more outspoken in his denunciation. A cycle of poems called **The Trail of War** appeared in 1920, blasting the leaders on both sides of the conflict and describing the horrors of modern warfare with relentless realism. One of his quatrains gives blistering comment on the commercial aspects of that struggle:

"In Europe's reeking slaughter-pen  
They mince the flesh of murdered  
men,  
While swinish merchants, snout in  
trough,  
Drink all the bloody profits off."

He was not like the clamorous pacifists of today who serve, wittingly or unwittingly, as a cloak for the greatest military conspiracy of all time. Stephan was simply an individualist with a conscience, assailing a thing that he hated. It lost him many friends at the time—in view of the heroic and costly record of the Icelandic-Canadians in World War II but his transparent honesty soon won most of them back.

Another thing that for a time, at any rate, cost him much popularity, was his hostility to the narrow-mindedness, conservatism and hypocrisy of

many of the established churches and their clergy. Yet he was not an atheist. A large Bible stood on the desk of his farm-house study and was in constant use. His poem "Eloi lamma sabakht-ani" is a moving expression of his loyalty to the atoning message of a crucified Saviour. Some would class him as a Unitarian; but he is best understood as a Protestant of the Protestants, maintaining to the end his right to confront divine Reality in his own individual fashion—but that fashion starkly rationalistic.

Thus far I have dealt chiefly with ways in which the impact of this iron man on the flinty rocks of a new environment beat out sparks of protest and repudiation. Yet this is only one part of the story. In other, and equally significant ways, he accepted the new land as the country of his true allegiance. Canada, after 1889, became his home and the home of his little children. He was one of the first organizers of the Markerville school district. In fact, the first schoolhouse was built on the Stephansson farm and received the patronage of his six children. Out of his slender means he contributed to every good cause in the community. His letters reveal the wide range of his friendships in Canada and the United States and likewise reveal how this self-taught genius stood head and shoulders above most of his contemporaries. He took a distinguished part in the annual festivals—such as this one of today—in which the Icelandic community paid its tribute to the Old Land and to the New. His great poem "Úr Íslendingadags ræðu" opens Sigurður Nordal's *Úrval* of 1939 and is the noblest tribute rendered by any Canadian to his ancestral home; but he also left eloquent testimony to

the place that Canada has claimed in his heart. Such are his "Fósturlandið", his "Sveitin mín" and "Klettafjöll", with their almost untranslatable incantation, his "Greniskógurinn", his "Sumarkvöld í Alberta" and his "Bundin ræða fyrir minni Kanada". first read at the Iclander's Day here in 1902. One may go further and claim that no other Canadian poet in any language has painted the Canadian landscape in the same sensitive detail and with the same sweep of eloquence. The prairies and the mountains of the Canadian West live imperishably in his verse.

The writers of the English-speaking world likewise passed into his consciousness but fragmentarily and unsystematically. He remarks in a letter dated 1902 that he had "once read Shakespeare, twenty years ago", but apart from one poem there is no other sign of interest or influence. The only other British writers whom he mentions with approval belong to his own period: John Morley, Herbert Spencer, T. H. Huxley, J. M. Barrie, "Ian Mac-laren", Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Robert Louis Stevenson, George Eliot, Rider Haggard, and Hall Caine. In other words, his taste ran to rationalists and to story-tellers. So far as North America is concerned, he speaks of Emerson, Longfellow, Poe and Holmes in the older generation and much more frequently of his contemporaries, Upton Sinclair, Jack London and Mark Twain. The only Anglo-Canadian author mentioned by name is "Ralph Connor". Yet we are perhaps wrong in looking in his correspondence for a detailed catalogue of his library; for even Icelandic literature, which influenced him deeply, is not set forth in any such fashion.

Certainly he was not isolated in interest from the continent of his adoption and the people with whom he shared it came very close to his heart.

Returning to my earlier thesis, I would assert in conclusion that Stephan G. Stephansson sums up triumphantly the problem faced by the new settler in a strange land. On the one hand he had his responsibility to his foster-country, the task of hewing out a new home in the wilderness, of making provision through his toil and his thrift for the on-going of the race in his own children, of seeing to it by his mastery of the soil that mankind itself might be fed. All these and many other responsibilities he met without faltering and without complaining.

But he was also a man of transcendent gifts of spirit. In him there was an uncontrollable urgency of creation, and he "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision". There was every external reason why he should have remained a "mute inglorious Milton" to the end of his days. He had little education except such as he gave himself. He was constrained to endure back-breaking toil all of his days. He had no time for writing except the hours that others gave to sleep. Yet his published articles and letters total 1400 pages and his published poetry 1800 pages, much of it of the very first rank. By being true to his own endowments of nature as well as to his duties to family and fosterland, he has enriched them both with spiritual wealth as well, and left for himself a deathless name among the citizens of this our country. It is to the indomitable poet even more than to the indomitable pioneer that the Government dedicated a provincial park in his name three years ago in Markei-

ville, Alberta. It is to the unconquerable spirit of a gifted man that they erected a monument there for all posterity to see.

Yet even these will pass, unless some Canadians keep alive, generation after generation, the noble language in which his hopes and aspirations are embodied. That is part of the duty laid upon us by his legacy of Icelandic

prose and verse. The other part is fidelity to the ideals for which he stood—a passion for work, abhorrence for tyranny and hypocrisy, reverence for human reason, and profound sympathy for all mankind.

Stephan G. was primarily a poet, and for my last words I must turn to verses that I have penned for this occasion:

### TO STEPHAN G.

Beneath the prairie grass your dust is sleeping,  
Close to the fields your daily toil once blest,  
While, towering high, the mighty hills are keeping  
Their timeless watch above your timeless rest.

Such were the mountains of your boyhood homeland,  
Vast peaks of rock and ice, yet fierce with fire  
As these are not, for in this fertile loam-land  
The only lava was your heart's desire.

Rugged you seemed to strangers, like the summit  
Of misty headlands near the frozen Pole,  
But deeper than the questing eye could plummet  
Burned the volcanic ardour of your soul.

Man's violence you loathed, of every fashion;  
The tyrant and the cheat called forth your hate;  
At human war you raged with searing passion,  
And greatly burned against the wicked great.

Yet these same fires that flamed within your spirit  
Could be benign, with warmth of honest love;  
Could raise a faithful friend to heaven, or near it,  
And light our world with radiance from above.

Through the long nights, while calmer hearts lay slumbering  
The fire within your brain burned white and warm,  
Melting the fervent thoughts in moulds past numbering,  
Fusing the ore of words to deathless form.

A hundred years have passed since first you lifted  
On Iceland's air a baby's quavering cry,  
And other hundreds will in sooth have drifted  
Across our earth before your voice can die.

Nay, while the saga-tongue is known and cherished  
And to warm ears its majesty imparts,  
The essence of your soul will not have perished  
But still live glorious in remembering hearts.

# A TRIP TO ICELAND

by FINNBOGI GUÐMUNDSSON

In February this year I wrote an article in the Icelandic weeklies in Winnipeg on a trip to Iceland. The article started like this: "As many may recall, I have since I came here mentioned to several people, whether they would be prepared to take a trip to Iceland in the summer of 1953, if a plane could be provided, flying direct between Winnipeg and Reykjavík. I have lately been investigating the possibilities of such a trip and written to Iceland for information. Now one of the Icelandic airways, Loftleiðir (Icelandic Airlines) has regular weekly flights between Reykjavík and New York, and therefore I thought I would write to one of the managers, Alfreð Elíasson, and find out if the Icelandic Airlines could combine such a trip with their regular flights."

When I had received a definite offer from the Icelandic Airlines I wrote a number of articles encouraging people to form a group of possibly fifty passengers.

But even though 200 people in Reykjavík decided in a few days to go on a boat-trip to Africa, fifty people could not be found in seven weeks on the whole continent prepared to fly to Iceland. So the original plan had to be changed. The plane could not come to Winnipeg for the group, so the passengers had to go to New York to catch the Icelandic plane there. The group of 37 met in New York on the 7th and 8th of June, 28 flying by TCA from Winnipeg. In New York the group was delayed for two days because of unfavorable winds in the Far East, holding up the plane some-

where between Hong Kong and Bangkok. The Icelandic Airlines and a Norwegian Company have two planes together, co-operating in such a way that a Norwegian crew takes the one plane all the way to Hong Kong while an Icelandic crew flies the other to New York, the starting point being the Sola-airport in Stavanger, Norway. The same plane therefore, flies between Hong Kong and New York via such places as Cairo and Reykjavík.

In New York we spent our time seeing the sights and were taken by Loftleiðir on a sightseeing tour. On Tuesday night, June 9th, Hannes Kjartansson, consul general of Iceland, and his wife, Elín, the daughter of the late Rev. Jónas A. Sigurðsson of Selkirk invited the whole group to their beautiful home in the countryside north of New York, a restful oasis after the deserts of Manhattan.

We left New York at 4 o'clock Wednesday afternoon and arrived in Reykjavík at noon of the following day, 11th of June, stopping for two hours to re-fuel in Gander, Newfoundland.

When we boarded the plane in New York the stewardesses handed everyone a small bouquet of Icelandic roses, which they had brought from Iceland. And on the way they served Icelandic hangikjöt—and brennivín. Before we landed in Reykjavík the pilots circled over the town for a while, and when we came down there was a large crowd gathered to receive us. I think that only two had to go to a hotel, all the rest went home with their relatives and friends, many of whom they either



had not seen for decades or had never seen at all. Names were called out: "Getið þér sagt mér, hver Ingibjörg Sveinsdóttir mundi vera í hópnum", (Could you tell me, who in the group is Ingibjörg Sveinsdóttir?) more than one asked me, and I did not know until later that she happened to be Mrs. Emma von Renesse.

In the evening we were invited with many other guests, to the premier's home, where we enjoyed Icelandic hospitality at its best. Mr. Steinþórsson, the premier, addressed the guests and gave a special welcome to Mrs. Rósa Benediktsson, Stephan G. Stephansson's daughter, who had been invited to go to Iceland by some of her friends in Canada and by the Icelandic Airlines, and was going to stay as a guest of the Icelandic government, while in Iceland. After that evening I am sure everyone felt at home, even though some had been away for half a century, and others had never been to Iceland before.

Next morning we headed east on a three days' trip across the southern rural districts of Iceland. The weather was comfortable, mild showers with bright intervals. We stopped in Hveragerði to see the greenhouses, where everyone was given a rose for his button hole. Farther east we came to Gunnarsholt, where the sands are being turned into vast pastures and where one could already imagine herds of cattle grazing.

We also went to Keldur, one of the old sagasteads of Iceland. The structure of the old farmhouse is mostly the same as it was in the 13th century and a part of it is being kept as a museum. I heard one of the women, who had left her old farm in Iceland sixty years

ago saying that seeing this old house alone made the trip worthwhile.

In the afternoon we got as far east as Múlakot in Fljótshlíð. Gunnar of Hlíðarendi found the Fljótshlíð beautiful nearly a thousand years ago and so it still is today. And perhaps the finest part of it is this Múlakot. There the human hand has helped nature by planting a park which has grown especially well. The housewife and the gardener, Guðbjörg of Múlakot, as she is called, a lady of 83, showed us around, assisted by her son, the painter, Ólafur Túbals.

In the evening we drove back west and stayed overnight at Laugarvatn, where four or five schools are situated, used in the winter as schools, but in the summer as a hotel.

Next morning we went to Gullfoss and Geysir and were very lucky, finding them in bright sunshine at their best. Opposite the power and dignity of Gullfoss and the thrill and glory of Geysir you do not feel like saying very much. You just admire them. So I say to you: Go and see them for yourself!

On the way down to Laugarvatn again we came to Skálholt, the old episcopal seat of the southern diocese. In 1956 it will be 900 years since bishop Ísleifur Gissurarson made Skálholt an episcopal seat and established a school for the Icelandic clergy, a historical event which is going to be commemorated then.

I shall always remember when we gathered in the church at Skálholt and sang: O þá náð að eiga Jesúm. I think we never sang better or had our hearts more tuned to the song than at that moment, just as if the voices of the past had joined in and given our song fullness and power.

The third and last day we were go-



ing to spend mostly at Þingvellir as guests of the National League of Iceland. The committee represented by Sigurgeir Sigurðsson the bishop and Dr. Ófeigur Ófeigsson amongst others, had invited a large number of people and arranged for an excellent program.

On the way to Þingvellir we stopped for a while at Sogsfossar, where we had lunch as guests of the municipal council of Reykjavík and were shown a new power plant, a huge undertaking, which is to supply Reykjavík and the south of Iceland with electricity, so badly needed in the rapidly growing capital and the surrounding districts.

At Þingvellir, which greeted us this time with drizzle and gloomy colours, the program started with a service by the bishop in the small Þingvallakirkja, a solemn and memorable moment.

Later everybody had coffee in the Valhöll-hotel, where professor Þorkell Jóhannesson gave an interesting talk on Þingvellir, the history and significance of the place. After the coffee the group was taken up to Almanna-gjá and to other interesting spots nearby.

In the evening the whole group sat down to a beautiful banquet, honored by the presence of the president of Iceland, Ásgeir Ásgeirsson, and Dóra Þórhallsdóttir, his wife. The president addressed the meeting and gave a special welcome to those of us who had come the longest way.

Other speakers were: Björn Ólafsson, minister of education, Sigurgeir Sigurðsson the bishop, Jónas Jónsson, and Gísli Jónsson chairman of the Þingvalla-committee, who invited the group to come to Þingvellir again on

some sunny day. Hálfðan Eiríksson spoke on behalf of the Félag Vestur-Íslendinga, the members of which are Icelanders who have come back from America to live in Iceland. In the week before we left, this society arranged for a farewell party, to be mentioned later.

Ólafur Hallsson of Eriksdale and I responded and thanked our hosts for the fine gathering at Þingvellir and all the kindness shown to the group ever since we arrived in Iceland.

Between items of the evening program at Þingvellir there was community singing, conducted by dr. Páll Ísólsson, the well-known composer and organist, who visited the United States two years ago as a guest of the United States State Department and gave organ recitals in Chicago, Minneapolis, Winnipeg and several other places.

We shall always treasure in our memory this day at Þingvellir. What it lacked in outward things, such as sunshine and playful colours was abundantly compensated for by the congenial spirit manifested at this gathering.

Someone suggested the idea of a yearly day being dedicated to Icelanders abroad, on which as many as possible would meet at Þingvellir, along with their relatives and friends. The Vestmannadagur (The day of the Westmen) had served a similar purpose for some time, but this new day would have a much wider appeal, if Icelanders at home as well as abroad could combine their efforts to make it a day of both renewed and lasting memories.

On the following day we were in-  
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## Icelandic Celebrations in 1953

In most places where the Icelandic people have settled on this continent in any appreciable numbers they have held annual festive celebrations, "Íslendingadagur". At least five such celebrations have been held this year so it has been deemed worthwhile to mention briefly some of the proceedings of each of them even if the details from some of them are scanty.

The first of these celebrations held this year was a small gathering of some one hundred people at Echo Lake Park, California on June 21st. In spite of the relatively small group of Icelanders in and around Los Angeles they have an active Icelandic Club which has continued to thrive and prosper for thirty years. Mrs. Gudney Thorvaldson was elected president of this organization for the ensuing year, with Mr. Niel Thor as vice-president.

The annual Icelandic Celebration at Hnausa was held at the community park "Íðavelli" on July 1st, with Jon Palsson of Geysir as chairman. The Fjallkona was represented by Mrs. Svava Spring, and Miss Gudrun Skulason represented Miss Canada.

One of the main speakers of the day was Hon. Valdimar Bjornson, Treasurer of the State of Minnesota, who in his toast to Iceland exhorted his audience to preserve their Icelandic cultural heritage by all existing media now at their disposal. The other speaker, Mr. Helgi Austmann, B.S.A., one of the many young promising men of the Arborg district, proposed the toast to Canada, in which he dwelt largely on the great potential resources of Canada, and our duties as citizens to develop them wisely, and

conserve them carefully for future generations. Dr. S. E. Bjornson, of Miniota, Manitoba, delivered an excellent poem dedicated to the occasion. A large local choir under the direction of Johannes Palsson, assisted by Mrs. Lilja Martin, provided a fine musical program.

The people of the northern Icelandic settlements on the Pacific Coast held their celebration on July 26, at the Blaine International Peace Gardens, with Andrew Danielson as their chairman. Rev. Eirikur Brynjólfson, the pastor of the Icelandic church at Vancouver, proposed the toast to Iceland. The English address was given by the Hon. Hal. Arnason, Jr. The musical program was under the direction of Stefan Solvason. Contributing to this musical program was a choir from Vancouver, and such well known soloists as Mr. Tani Bjornson, Margaret Sigmar Davidson, and Ninna Stevens.

The Icelandic groups from the communities surrounding Seattle, Wash., held their celebration at Silver Lake on August 2nd, under the chairmanship of Mr. G. P. Johnson. Mrs. Margaret Kristjanson appeared as the Fjallkona. The Icelandic address was given by Rev. Eirikur Brynjólfson, Vancouver. Rev. S. O. Thorlakson, the other main speaker, addressed the gathering in English. The musical program was under the direction of Mr. E. Breidford, assisted by Mrs. H. M. Eastwold. The main features of the musical program were vocal solos by Julius Samuelson, and Elias Breidford, and a musical act by three children of Rev. and Mrs. S. O. Thorlakson.

The celebration at Gimli Park, Aug-

ust 3rd, under the chairmanship of Mr. Jon K. Laxdal, was to some extent a departure from its usual form in that the day's main program was largely dedicated to the memory of the great poet, Stephan G. Stephansson, the centenary of whose birth falls on October 3rd, this year.

The Fjallkona was represented by



**Dr. Watson Kirkconnell**

President of Acadia University, Nova Scotia

Miss Jorunn Thordarson, of Gimli with Donna Mae Einarson, and Helene Mae Bergman as her attendants. Honored guests, who brought greetings to the gathering, included Mayor Barney Egilson, of Gimli, Honourable Douglas Campbell, Premier of the Province of Manitoba, and

Grettir L. Johannson, Icelandic Consul. The celebration committee had the good fortune to secure the services of two distinguished speakers for this occasion, Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, President of Acadia University Wolfville, Nova Scotia, whose address appears elsewhere in this issue, and Rev. Einar Sturlaugsson of Patreksfjörður, Icel. Rev. Sturlaugsson is visiting here as a joint guest of the University of Manitoba and the Icelandic communities at large in recognition of his donation of a very valuable collection of rare magazines and periodicals to the Icelandic portion of the University of Manitoba Library. Rev. Sturlaugsson, in his excellently proposed toast to Stephan G. and Iceland, skilfully evaluated the works of the poet and pointed out his great contribution to the wide field of Icelandic literature. The veteran poet Guttormur J. Guttormsson also dedicated his poem on this occasion to Stephan G. A fine program of musical selections by a choir under the direction of Johannes Palsen, made an excellent contribution to the afternoon program. A complete program of junior and senior sports was carried on throughout the day. During the evening Mr. Alvin Blondal, assisted by Mrs. Pearl Johnson, conducted a short lively period of community singing. As a final feature of the evening program two films secured by Professor Gudmundsson on his recent trip to Iceland, were shown to a large and an enthusiastic audience. **J. K. L.**

## Olafson Wins Garden Cup

Gus Olafson won the Birks Cup for highest points in vegetables and flowers, amateur section in the 44 an-

nual fair of the St. Vital Agricultural Society held last week.

## *Trinidad—The Land of the Humming Bird*

by ANNA RUTH HILLAND

Our first glimpse of Trinidad, after an eight-hour non-stop flight south from New York, reveals a rugged coast line with steep cliffs and pounding surf interspersed with stretches of sandy beaches. In the background, shrouded in a light haze, can be seen the mountains of Venezuela, the mainland of South America. Flying over the northern part of Trinidad, we cross a range of mountains, completely covered in dense tropical vegetation. With some measure of relief, a flat plateau comes into view, on which is situated the Airport, surrounded by fields of waving sugar cane. Disembarking from the air-conditioned plane we are struck by a hot blast of moist tropical air which cuts short the breath. We learn with some dismay that the day is not unusually warm, and that the weather never varies to any great extent. In the background we hear weird music, quite unlike anything we have heard before. It does not sound like drums of some primitive African tribe, which we half expect to hear—in fact the tune being played is quite a modern one. This is our first introduction to Trinidad's famous "steel band", of which more will be said later. So much for our introduction to Trinidad, the "Land of the Humming Bird."

### THE ISLAND

Geographically, Trinidad is the southernmost of the British West Indian Islands, and is washed by both the waters of the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The Island is very small in size, being approximately

fifty miles long and thirty miles wide, and is roughly rectangular in shape. It is separated from the mainland of South America by the Gulf of Paria in the centre, and two narrow treacherous straits known as the Dragon's Mouth in the north and the Serpent's Mouth in the south.

To touch briefly on Trinidad's history, the Island was discovered in 1498 by Christopher Columbus on his third voyage. The colony was thus acquired and held by Spain up until the beginning of the 19th century when it became a British possession. The Spanish left their mark on the island's history, as witnessed by Spanish geographical names and customs still remaining. Roman Catholicism, introduced by the followers of Columbus, is today the dominant religion of Trinidad.

Despite its small area, the Island of Trinidad today supports a population of 620,000, which is among the most cosmopolitan in the world. With whites comprising only about 4% of the total, the basic element in this ethnic potpourri is the negro, a descendent of the original African negro slave, who was imported to work the Island's plantations prior to the abolition of slavery in 1835. After 1835, agricultural laborers were recruited from India under the Indenture System, whereby they were bound to work on the plantations for a period of five years. They came in ever-increasing numbers until 1917, and today as a result approximately one-third of the population is East Indian. Added to this are Chinese, Spanish, French,



Portuguese, Polynesian and Syrian elements and the resulting mixture produces many hues. Discovering the nationality of those with mixed blood becomes an exceedingly complicated business, as there are usually at least two or three predominating strains to be considered.

The climate in Trinidad is warm and humid. The temperature ranges from 67° to 97°, and mean temperatures are 84° for the day and 74° at night. The evenings are always cool, for which we are thankful, and the island is healthful except in certain areas bordering the swamps. There are two seasons, the dry season extending from January to May, and the rainy season which lasts throughout the rest of the year. Because of the rains that fall during the latter period, the cities are constructed with a network of open drains which enables the water to flow back into the sea. At times the flow is so heavy that even the sloping streets are flooded with gushing torrents after a storm has subsided. Though the rainfall is heavy, it usually lasts a very short while, and days are never continuously overcast. As in all tropical countries, there is little twilight. Dawn flares up about 5.30 a.m. and darkness falls suddenly about 6.30 p.m. The humidity is very high, usually around 95 to 99%, and particularly felt as the rainy season wears on. You feel very sluggish, especially so at mid-day, and it is a distinct social blunder to call on anyone between the hour of noon and the four o'clock tea as the afternoon siesta will surely be interrupted.

The growth on the Island is very luxuriant. The forests are extensive, and produce many durable woods employed in house building and cab-

inet-work, such as cedar, teak, cyp and many others. These forests are dotted by the magnificent colors of the flowering trees, such as the "poui" which has a beautiful yellow flower, and the "immortel" which is a blaze of scarlet. Tall fern-like grasses grow in great profusion, as well as groves of bamboo and majestic palm trees of every variety. As the forests are being opened up, wild animals are becoming less plentiful, but monkeys, lappe, agoutis (a type of deer), armadillos, ant eaters, and porcupines are still to be found. Though there are poisonous snakes on the island, you seldom hear of anyone being bitten. Many species of birds are to be seen, remarkable for their beautiful plumage. In the country districts it is not uncommon to see flying overhead flocks of beautiful macaws or small parrots which are always distinguishable by their constant chatter in flight. There are more than eighteen species of the humming-bird in Trinidad, with their dazzling coats of ruby, emerald, gold and opal—and this has given rise to the Island's name, "Land of the Humming-Bird."

## INDUSTRIES

The Island's chief industry is agriculture, and the foremost crop has been cocoa. After twenty-five years of adverse markets, disease and failure, the cocoa-growing industry is only now regaining the proud position it once held in the Island's economy. Large plantations which once provided a luxurious living for a group of rich planters and which were allowed to lapse into forests, are now being replanted by their new owners. The British Government's Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture is situated in Trinidad, and since the war



scientific research conducted there has made a valuable contribution to Trinidad's cocoa industry.

While cocoa occupies the same position in the Trinidadian economy that wheat does in Canada, the Island is ever increasing its other agricultural products. The citrus harvest is becoming more important every year, and the brilliant tropical sunshine produces grapefruits, oranges, limes and lemons of a sweeter and much juicier variety than those we are accustomed to buying in Canada. Ranking with the citrus crop is the sugar cane, which is not only grown but also processed into sugar, molasses and rum at a number of plants located on the Island. The Island's coconut plantations produce the rich coconut oil which has a variety of uses throughout the West Indian islands. Coffee and bananas are gaining favor every year. Trinidad is attempting to develop a varied agricultural economy which will not collapse with any subsequent failure in the cocoa industry.

Trinidad's second major industry is the producing and refining of crude oil. Oil was first discovered in Trinidad over thirty years ago, and despite a levelling off of production, one-third of the area of this small island still manages to produce about half the oil currently being produced in Canada. In addition, Trinidad, with its stable British government, is a large refining centre for Venezuelan crude oil. Thus the oil industry contributes over one-third of the Island's total income, and also provides favorable employment for over seventeen-thousand workers.

Another product of Trinidad worthy of mention is asphalt, which is mined from the Pitch Lake located in the

south of the Island. This freak of nature has been described as one of the "wonders of the world" but in appearance the Lake is unspectacular and disappointing. It is not unlike a Canadian slough covering some one hundred and fifty acres, and dotted with islands of trees and grass. However the surface of the Lake, instead of being water, is asphalt, and looks much like the surface of our main highways in Canada. Because of the black surface and its location, the temperature on the Lake usually reaches 110° and is very hot underfoot. Thus it is with amazement that one watches the workers, toiling barefooted because they claim shoes wear out too quickly. With the use of picks, they pry out large chunks of solid pitch, and within forty-eight hours the hole from which the pitch has been removed has filled, as the mass moves slowly and continuously. Though the Lake does not replenish itself to the full extent, the supply of pitch will last for hundreds of years to come, and at the present time there is sufficient to pave the streets of all the leading cities of the world many times over.

The above-mentioned products, as well as other local-made goods such as Angostura bitters, matches, soap and so on, are exported from Trinidad, and in exchange, dry goods, hardware, and groceries of all kinds are imported. Potatoes come from Belgium and Holland, onions from South Africa and Portugal, frozen meat from Australia and New Zealand, smoked ham and bacon from Canada. Though local people can live very cheaply on native grown vegetables, fish and rice, a Canadian or American eating the food to which he is ac-

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## PIONEER MOTHER

by HELEN SIGURDSON\*

It was the end of a hot August afternoon in the year 1787, when Mary O'Neil rode into the clearing in front of the trading post at Lewiston, New York, at the end of a string of pack horses. Almost the first person she saw was her husband, who stood up from the little crowd of men lounging in front of the tavern and ran forward to meet her.

Even as she bent to give him a kiss, her eyes skimmed the little group behind him and she asked, "Where's Neddy?"

"I left him at home."

"You left him at home?" Mary's dark eyes widened with astonishment.

"Yes. Here I'll take the baby."

She bent down from the saddle and put the child she carried into his father's arms. "I thought you said home was two days journey from here."

"It is", Edward pushed the shawl from around the baby's head and with his one free hand started working on the knot, holding the cap in place.

"Then Sam decided to wait over for a few days." Mary had dismounted and was standing beside him now.

"No. Sam brought the message that you had reached Ft. Schlosser and then headed for Detroit before I started to meet you here. Come, help me with this infernal thing, Mary. You forget, I haven't seen the baby yet.

"And you haven't told me why you didn't bring Neddy with you, and who's taking care of him."

"He's taking care of himself."

"You mein he's alone."

"Yes."

"Alone", Mary remembered the

miles of wilderness behind her, the nights her brother and the Indian guide had taken turns watching and keeping the fire blazing to frighten away the wolves. The stories of Indian attacks all along the frontier. "Alone, you left him alone, my baby."

"Baby! Sure and Neddy wouldn't thank you if he could hear you say that."

"He's only eight years old."

"Nine. You forget he's had a birthday since you saw him. There", as the tie finally gave way and the cap fell to the ground. His lips curved in a smile of satisfaction. "This one's a chip of the old block" with a tender hand he touched the baby's curling dark hair, "real black Irish, and you had to name him Caleb."

"Caleb William, after my father".

"Well young man, your father's going to call you Bill."

Mary stood there, stupified, unbelieving. For a year, ever since Edward and their oldest son had left for the west to take up land across the Niagara river in Canada, she had looked forward to this hour. So far all the plans made so carefully at that time had worked out. Mary and her two little daughters had gone to her father's home in Philadelphia. The baby had been born in January. Sam the Indian guide who had been hired to take a small party of Loyalists from New Jersey and Pennsylvania into Canada had returned in March. In April he had started back to Canada with Mary and her children. Mary's young brother, Thomas, who wanted to see the west, had accompanied

them. At Ft. Schlosser, the guide had gone on ahead to let Edward know that his family had reached the Niagara River, while Mary and Thomas had waited for two days and then joined another party of emigrants headed up the portage toward Lewiston.

She realized as she stood there in the midst of the commotion of unloading, how much she had counted on seeing her first-born child. Edward had given her the baby again and gone over to his two little daughters, Hannah and Julia who were still tied in their chairs suspended on either side of their horse. He helped the children down, while Thomas began unloading the pack horses.

"I still don't understand why you didn't bring Neddy with you." Mary looked reproachfully at her husband when he came back with one little girl perched on his shoulder, the other clinging to his hand.

"Stop fretting Mary. I had to leave him behind to look after the cow."

"You left him alone to look after a cow!"

"Yes. Don't you realize Mary, having a cow means that the children will have proper food this winter, even though you and I may have to live on what game I can shoot and the meal I'm getting tomorrow. It was pure luck my getting her at this time. Our nearest neighbour decided he didn't like farming after all and joined a party of fur traders."

"I'm sorry I couldn't get a room for you tonight. Everything taken. I've arranged for us to sleep in one of the barns, we'll have supper at the inn."

"Couldn't we go on tonight?"

"You forget we cross the river tomorrow and there isn't a ferry cross-

ing tonight. Besides you look tired. What you need is a good rest."

That night Edward climbed the ladder to the hayloft to find the children asleep and Mary in the patch of moonlight by the door combing her hair. "Pretty as ever", he said, lifting the mass of wavy dark tresses in his hand. "You know Mary, you haven't changed one bit since the days when I came a courting over the wall of your father's garden. No, leave it that way", as she took the hair in her hands to braid it. He sat down beside her, drawing her head down on his shoulder. "In memory of those days, I've brought you a present". Reaching into his pocket, he pulled out two peaches and laid them in her lap. Her fingers caressed the velvet surface and lifting the fruit she inhaled its fragrance before tasting it.

"Do you remember the peach tree that grew against the wall in the garden back in Philadelphia?" Did she remember the peach tree? A wave of homesickness washed over her and the succulent fruit turned to salt and ashes in her mouth.

"I found a tree exactly like it growing wild, over at the edge of the woods. That means we can have an orchard. Only wait and I'll give you as fine a home as the one you've left." His hand closed over her own. It was a strong hand hardened by days of manual work. She remembered the handsome young captain, whose hands used to be as soft as her own, the man who had a groom to care for his horse and a bat boy to keep his equipment in order. And now, she touched the calloused palms with her fingers and thought, "Captain Edward O'Neil turned farmer."

Mary awoke that night with a sud-

den start. Someone had screamed "Mother". The shrill cry was still ringing in her ears when she sat up. Over there to the left the little girls slept, she could hear their quiet breathing, the baby in his shawl lay beside her. She touched his cheek with the palm of her hand and felt his warm breath against her fingers. Edwards lay over there near the ladder, a shaft of moonlight from a crack in the wall outlined the curve of his ear a lock of black hair and a strip of tanned throat. It must have been a dream or could it have been Neddy. Did he need her and had his cry of anguish reached her over all these miles. She lay staring into the darkness listening. Below in the barn one of the horses stamped, there was the scurrying of rats in the rafters above. She had no idea of the time, somewhere between midnight and morning, the hours when life is at its lowest ebb and the sorrows of the past and the fears for the future rise like phantoms to haunt the one who cannot sleep.

Thomas had left earlier that evening, bound for the Ohio country. Parting with him meant the breaking of last strand of the cable binding her to the past. She, herself had cut the first strand when she had secretly met the young British officer, her father's patient, in the garden at home. The past, the beautiful gracious past was gone, all swept away by the great waters of the war. Her people had never forgiven her for marrying a Tory and she could not forgive them for their treatment of Edward, when after his return from the war he had come to live among them.

In the distance she could hear the rushing of the Niagara river. Yester-

day she had stood with Thomas watching the mighty cataract, and now she felt like a bit of flotsom carried over the falls. Never again could she return to the peaceful upper reaches of the lakes. The waters ahead seemed dark and treacherous. Her hand closed over the miniature which hung on a ribbon about her neck. She knew every line of the beloved little face of her first born child, the deep dimple in his cheek, the sweet curve of the lips, the tumbled reddish curls. What manner of man was it who could leave a nine year old child alone for five days in a cabin miles from any other human being. She thought of her own father. She could never have endured the strain of the past ten years without his strength and wisdom, he alone of all her family and friends had never reproached her, never been unkind. The very thought of him brought peace and she slept.

During the next two days, she felt like a horse on a treadmill, always hurrying and never getting anywhere. There was a fog which delayed their crossing the river until noon. One of the horses lost a shoe and they had to wait for the blacksmith at Queenston. The little girls were tired and cross, the baby cried with the colic. She went through the motions of caring for children helping Edward select the store of supplies at the trading post and stifled her resentment at these time-consuming, yet necessary tasks.

The closer they came to their destination, the more impatient she became. When Edward stopped in the middle of the second afternoon to load his gun and shoot at some ducks swimming in a pond by the side of the trail, she had to check the angry words that

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## *Dr. Alexander Johannesson*

### **An Appreciation**



**Dr. Alexander Johannesson**

On July 15, last, Dr. Alexander Johannesson, Rector of the University of Iceland, passed his sixty-fifth birthday. By custom and rule in some countries sixty-five is the retiring age in many professions and occupations. Fortunately Dr. Johannesson is not retiring but it is well at this milestone in his career to pass in brief review over his remarkable and even singular achievements.

In 1914 Alexander Johannesson obtained his Master's degree in Germanics at the University of Copenhagen and two years later wrote his thesis for his Ph.D. degree on "The Maid of Orleans". That same year he joined the staff of the University of Iceland. In course of time he advanced to the

rectorship of the university, which is the same office as that of President in this country. He has been Rector during the terms 1932-1935 and 1939-1942, and from 1948 up to the present time.

Dr. Johannesson has served his university well as is shown not only by the cultural and material progress which the university has made during the last twenty years but equally so by the glowing tributes paid to him by the graduates. But his activities are not confined to the university; in fact it may be said that his main interest does not centre on the university and his ever increasing responsibilities there. It centres on his mother tongue, the Icelandic language and research work to which a study of that language has led. In relation to Icelandic the well known quotation, at times selected as a motto or lodestar, applies very fittingly to Dr. Alexander: "*Felix qui causas potuit cognoscere rerum*", (he is fortunate who is able to ascertain the reason for things.)

To Dr. Alexander Johannesson it was not enough to know the Icelandic language ancient and modern. He felt that it was necessary to go back and delve into its origins. This he proceeded to do and in course of time discovered that there was no escape, even if he had sought it, from extending that research into the wider field of the origin of the Indo-European group of languages and from there to the origin of language, as an instrument at the command of the human being no matter what the particular form.

His pioneering work in this progressively expanding study found its first



expression in a book written in German and published in 1920, which in English may be called: "The Basic Grammar of the Norse Languages". In 1923 this was followed by "Íslenzk tunga í fornöld", (Ancient Icelandic), a text which has been used in the University of Iceland ever since. Many books and articles followed during the next ten years such as: "Hugur og tunga", (Thoughts and Language), in 1926; "Die Suffixe im Islandischen", (Suffixes in Icelandic) in 1927; "Die Komposita im Islandischen" (Compounds in Icelandic) in 1929; Die Mediageminata im Islandischen, (Double soft mutes in Icelandic) in 1932.

These are but foundation material to something which transcends all Dr. Alexander's other activities, even his contribution to the University of Iceland, important though it is. His greatest achievement, for which he has become internationally known, is the summation of his studies, for decades, of the origin, first of Icelandic, then of the other Indo-European languages and finally of language itself in its evolution as the outward expression of man's thoughts and emotions and his means of communicating them.

Here Dr. Johannesson's studies find two outlets, one in the Icelandic language and the other in the leading world language, English.

In 1930 he began his gigantic undertaking of compiling a dictionary in which the origin of words in the Icelandic language is traced. After over twenty years of painstaking research the work is now completed and is being printed in Switzerland.

A research of this magnitude was bound to lead to a wider research—to a study of the origin and evolution of language. This is a field limited to a

few experts and Dr. Johannesson is one of them.

At first he confined himself to the Indo-European languages and in 1943 published: "Um frumtungu Indógermana og frumheimkynni", (On the Original Language and Abode of the Indo-Germans). The following year the field is widened to the development of language as such and "Origin of Language" appears in which he expands his gestural theory. There is an introduction to the book by G. R. Driver of Oxford, an acknowledged authority in the same field. This book was followed by a series of articles in "Nature", published in England. Dr. Alexander Johannesson summarizes his gestural theory in one of those articles\* as follows:

"Human speech consists of emotional sounds, nature sounds, and of gesture sounds which are spontaneous imitations by speaking organs to designate the form or shape of things in Nature or movements."

Although part of these books and articles are beyond this writer, and most laymen, they, however, reveal an evolution not beyond the average intellect to follow. To us, of Icelandic blood, these studies are of particular interest and stimulation because they establish the important part which the ancient language, now known as Icelandic, plays in the preservation of the root elements of the modern Indo-European family of languages.

The determination of Dr. Johannesson, even at this milestone, to continue his research work and his duties at the university, can best be described in the language of a former student, Guðni Jónsson. Writing in "Tíminn", pub-

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\*Nature, Vol. 166, p. 60, published in July 1950.

lished in Iceland, he makes this revealing observation:

Whoever knows Professor Alexander, his ceaseless and unyielding industry, his mental acumen and lively interest, will not for a moment think that he will let the years decide his activities and actions. The urge to action not his years will decide."

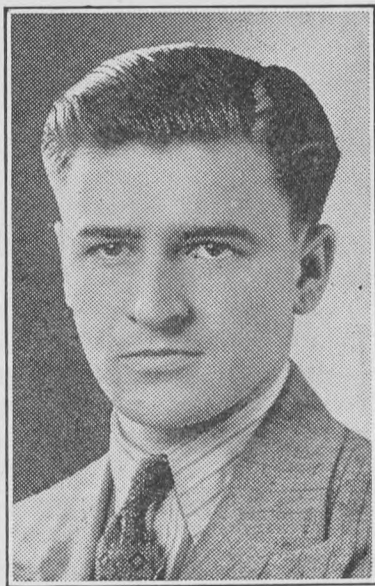
But another quality can be added. It could not be more vividly delineated than in the words of the same former student. He concludes his article in stirring words of praise:

"But though his fame be wide and and his achievements great, it is our opinion that his personal qualities surpass them. Those men are indeed fortunate who are blessed with both. Professor Alexander is in that group—a man of sterling qualities, a gentleman. I found him to be such in everything".

The Icelandic Canadian wishes Dr. Alexander Johannesson many years of happiness and of useful service for Iceland, its people and their language.

W. J. L.

## "Siggi" Sigmundson Makes Further Progress



Mr. Sigurdur Sigmundson, manager of B. C. Electric Company's transit operations has been elected president of The Canadian Transit Association which represents 31 major transit operators and 71 manufacturers of equipment. Last year this industry grossed \$126 millions, carried 1,261 million passengers over 226 million miles.

The Financial Post, Canada's outstanding financial paper, published in Toronto, in the issue of June 27, 1953 made particular mention of the appointment. We quote:

"Sigurdur Sigmundson from Reykjavik, that rather foreboding name and birthplace belong to a smiling, soft spoken Icelander who has just been elected President of The Canadian Transit Association. Spare time activity has narrowed since his days at the University of Manitoba, when he starred on the hockey, soccer and baseball teams. Now he limits leisurely hours to an active Rotary Club affiliation. He is Past President of the Vancouver Scandinavian Businessmen's Club and a member of the Terminal City Club."

The Icelandic Canadian Club congratulates "Siggy". He was a member of the Club before he went to Vancouver in 1942 on leave of absence from the Winnipeg Electric Company to become Regional Director for Transit Control in British Columbia.

See Icelandic Canadian Autumn 1948.

# Poetry and Short Story *Contest—*

When the Icelandic Canadian was launched the committee in charge decided to put on a short story contest. This proved successful, prizes were awarded and the prize winning stories and some of the others were published.

Owing to the concentration by everybody on war activities at the time and the need, recognized by the committee, of obtaining records of enlistment and overseas service of people of Icelandic descent and the almost immediate inauguration of a plan for publishing brief accounts of the achievements of our people in civilian life, interest in short story and other contests waned and for the time being the idea was dropped.

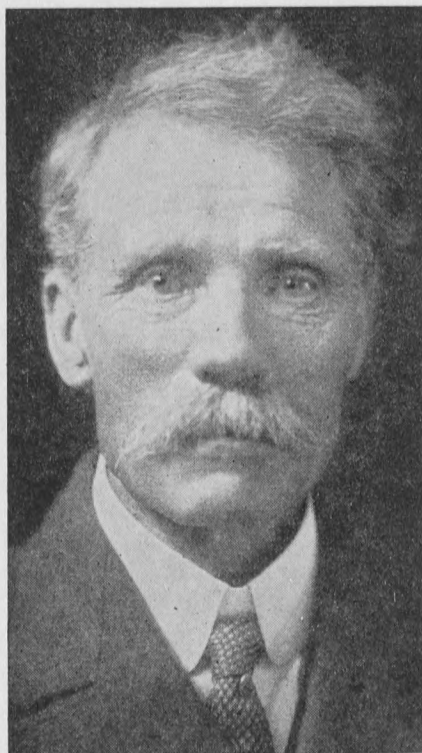
Encouragement of creative writing, in poetry and prose, should be one of the major policies of this magazine. It may be that in the field of letters the Icelandic people in this country are on the cross-roads. In the past most of the poetry and a good portion of the prose writing has been in Icelandic. But a gradual change has been taking place. The volume of writing in Icelandic is decreasing—an inexorable fact which has to be faced. That should not discourage us; it rather should put us on the alert. The very general bent to literature in the Icelandic people, nurtured through centuries of struggle in a land of inspiring beauty, will not disappear in one or two generations. It must find an outlet and if Icelandic no longer serves the purpose English must be selected.

The Icelandic Canadian has decided to revive the short story contest and to widen its encouragement to writing by giving prizes in other fields of literature. Poetry—innate to so many Icelanders—obviously must be on the list.

More particulars of the two contests will be given later. In the meantime we say to you: Draw on your inherited literary talent and have a poem or a short story ready when the details are announced in the next number.

THE MAGAZINE COMMITTEE.

## The Stephansson Memorial in Iceland



Stephan G. Stephansson

On the 19th of July this year a monument commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of the poet Stephan G. Stephansson was unveiled at Arnarstapi in the county of Skagafjord in Iceland. This monument which was presented to the Icelandic nation by the Federation of Youth Societies in Skagafjord stands on a rocky eminence not far away from Kirkjuhóll where Stephansson was born on the 3rd, of October, 1853. The unveiling ceremony was performed by the poet's daughter Mrs. Rósa Benediktson who was in Iceland for the occasion as the guest of the Icelandic government. Some two thousand people were in attendance includ-

ing a number of Western Icelanders from the group which went to Iceland this summer with the excursion organized by Prof. Finnbogi Guðmundsson.

The Stephansson memorial takes the form of a tapered three-sided cairn of native Icelandic stone. It stands about 15 feet in height and has a perimeter of 26 feet at the base. On each side is a bronze plaque bearing a likeness of the poet and an inscription taken from his verse. The plaques are the work of the sculptor Ríkarður Jónsson. (It is hoped to have a picture of the cairn in the next issue of this magazine).

A highlight of the dedication ceremonies was a speech by the premier of Iceland, Mr. Steingrímur Steinþórsson, who spoke in part as follows:

"Nearly one hundred years ago, on the 3rd day of October, 1853, there was born to a couple at Kirkjuhóll in this very neighborhood a son to whom was given the name of Stefan. His parents were Guðbjörg Magnúsdóttir a native of these parts and Guðmundur Stefansson whose origins were in the county of Þingeyjarsýsla.

This boy later became a pioneer in North America and one of the greatest poets that the Icelandic nation has produced in any age.

Seemingly the Goddess of Fortune did not smile on the cradle of this infant. He grew up at three different crofts in Skagafjord and on one such in Þingeyjarsýsla. None of these is now inhabited—all have long since been claimed by the wilderness. At the age of twenty Stephan left his native land . . .

The youth Societies had with others the honour and good fortune to invite Stephan to Iceland in the summer



of 1917. It was incumbent on no one more than the youth of the country to show him honour, esteem and respect. It is still the younger generation in Iceland that keeps alive the fame and memory of his work. It is the youth of Skagafjord—the Federation of Youth Societies—that has erected to the great poet the memorial which will be unveiled here today at Arnarstapi, one of the incomparable beauty spots of this inspiring county. I offer my thanks to the young men and young women who have worked at this task. They and this county may pride themselves on having taken the lead in recognizing this son of Skagafjord in a manner that future generations will long remember.

There are among us today a number of Western Icelanders who are now on a visit to the land of their fathers. They are all dear to us as representatives of the Icelandic community in the

Western World. Our compatriots have conducted themselves on that continent of many nations in such a way as to bring lasting renown to the whole Icelandic race. We welcome these good folk and it gives us much pleasure that they should be able to witness this dedication . . . .

Our meeting place today adjoins a much travelled highway. The monument erected beside it commemorates the lifework of Stephan G. Stephansson. I surmise that many who pass this spot will pause for a moment to consider the life and work of the poet Stephan and will resolve to bring to their own chosen tasks the same qualities of courage, fortitude, integrity and manliness that distinguished Stephan G. Stephansson in thought and deed. If our nation makes these virtues its own its future will be assured."

H. Th.

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## Called to Red Cross Service in Japan

A long distance call from Toronto on August 4th last from the Canadian Red Cross Society requesting her services swiftly launched **Miss Asta Eggertson** on a new career which will take her to Japan.

Miss Eggertson left the same night for Toronto where she spent a whirlwind week being fitted for Red Cross uniforms, taking medical examinations, and attending lectures to qualify her for her new job. She was then flown to Vancouver, and was on her way to Japan, within nine days of her phone call. She will be posted either to the Maple Leaf Club

in Tokyo or to the Commonwealth hospital in Kure.

Miss Eggertson is a graduate in Arts from the University of Manitoba and also has her diploma from the School of Social Work.

Miss Eggertson previously had been doing social service work for the Childrens Aid society, but had recently applied to the Red Cross to be posted as part of a welfare team in the Far East.

She is the daughter of Mrs. Thorey Eggertson, and the late Arni Eggertson of Winnipeg.

## *Publicity from the Outside*

It is always pleasing to have others show attention to Iceland, to the Icelandic people here and over there and to the language. This happens quite frequently and in a variety of forms. Someone may refer to the language, others to persons famous in Iceland's history, others to common everyday events and facts. Here are three good illustrations of how this may happen.

### **English Girl Learns Icelandic**

A young woman, Eva Johnson of Priesthill, Wetherby, Yorkshire, England, visited Winnipeg recently with her father who was here on business.

Eva Johnson lives about twelve miles from Leeds and belongs to the Dialect Society of Leeds. In the Yorkshire dialect there are many words of Icelandic (or Norse) origin. For instance a play is called a "leik" and a theatre "leikhus". Old Icelandic is taught in the University of Leeds by a professor who is an Englishman. Miss Johnson has taken correspondence lessons from him. But it was in Iceland that she began the study of Icelandic. She has been there four times and at one time stayed four months. She likes the country and its people. In order to get practice in speaking Icelandic Eva often went from shop to shop (here store to store) buying only one article in each one but engaged the clerk in Icelandic for as long as the clerk could spare the time. Sometimes she asked people on the street for an address, which she knew, merely to speak Icelandic to them. When people discovered that her mother language was English they wanted to practice their

English on her and a good time was had.

Eva Johnson reads and pronounces Icelandic remarkably well. She can speak the language but slowly. As was to be expected she had difficulty with the endings. One of her surprise questions was "Hvaðan af Íslandi kemur þú?"

Eva Johnson corresponds in Icelandic with a number of people in Iceland, and would be glad to correspond with Canadians of Icelandic descent.

Miss Eva Johnson is the type of emissary that is needed in other countries if Iceland is to find its right place in the English world of letters.



### **The Jon Sigurdson Statue**

On July 15, last the Winnipeg Tribune went out of its way to draw attention to a statue that has for many years stood, as on a platform addressing an audience, on the Legislative Building grounds. It is a statue of Jon Sigurdson, the most famous of the many sons of Iceland who fought for its independence.

The Tribune published the picture on page 39 and went on to say:

"Manitoba's 83rd birthday is today.

"On her 51st birthday, July, 1921 the Icelandic citizens of the province presented her with this statue, full length bronze, of their patriot Jon Sigurdsson. He was unveiled in a ceremony on the Legislative Building grounds.

"He stands close to the corner of

Kennedy and Broadway, facing east, toward Iceland.

"Born in 1811, Jon Sigurdsson died in 1899 and was given a public funeral



Courtesy Wpg. Tribune  
in Reykjavík. This statue is a replica\*  
of one in Reykjavík that stands in  
front of the Parliament Buildings.

"He got home rule for his people in

1874, the year that marks the first  
Icelandic trek to Lake Winnipeg.

"The lilacs have grown tall as the  
statue in 22 years. Little boys climb  
about his knees, gaining a foothold on  
the high relief plaque beneath."

\* The original and replica were made by  
the famous Icelandic sculptor, Einar Jónsson,  
born in 1874.



### Growing Barley in Iceland

One would hardly expect that a  
Western Canadian farm journal  
would seek to give information to its  
readers about Iceland, but such is the  
case. In the Country Guide, published  
in Winnipeg, a news item on Iceland  
appeared recently, which in part reads  
as follows:

"Fish normally account for about  
90% of Iceland's exports, which are  
sold principally in Britain, the United  
States and Europe. Her total acreage  
of cultivated land is not very large,  
about one-third of her population are  
farmers, but even after schemes for  
increasing the cultivated area are com-  
pleted, no more than 165,000 acres  
will be cultivated.

The government has instituted soil  
drainage schemes and is encouraging  
the increased use of fertilizers to im-  
prove yields."

The Icelandic Canadian is glad to  
publish any items concerning the Ice-  
landic people and would thank it's  
readers to clip them out and forward  
them to one of the news editors.

—M. H.

**Subscribe to  
THE  
ICELANDIC CANADIAN**

## Woman Suffrage in Manitoba

by W. Kristjanson

The women's suffrage movement in Canada had its beginning as early as 1852, when Canadian delegates attended a Woman's Rights Convention in the United States. The organized movement, as such, however, did not begin until 1876, with the founding of the Toronto Women's Literary Club, whose aim included the political enfranchisement of women. The Toronto Women's Suffrage Association was founded in 1883, about the time when Sir John A. MacDonald introduced a Bill in Parliament which included the granting of the Dominion Suffrage to unmarried women possessing the required qualifications, a measure which was defeated.

In Iceland, the first women's suffrage worker was Briet Bjarnheðinsdóttir (1856-1924) who, in 1885, published a newspaper article on women's rights and, in 1895, founded a woman suffrage paper.

In Manitoba there was less opposition to contend with than in Eastern Canada, because of the part played by women in pioneering life. As early as 1893 the W.C.T.U. at its annual meeting in Winnipeg, adopted a forthright suffrage resolution and petitioned the legislature. Honorable Joseph Martin, former Attorney-General, was at this time in favor of woman suffrage. In the early 1900's the W.C.T.U. convention program wound up with a franchise message. In the first decade of the century, however, there was slackened activity, although the Labor Party in Manitoba gave its support in 1902, and by 1908 the Grain Growers' Guide was giving its support.

Icelandic suffrage workers played an active and, for a period, a prominent part in the campaign for woman suffrage in Manitoba. The originators of an organized and sustained campaign were Margret and Sigfus Benedictsson, with Sigfus first in the



Margret J. Benedictsson

field. "I was the first person to make a public move in this matter, in 1890". (Sigfus B. Benedictsson: Private letter, August 5, 1946.) That same year, however, there was a lively platform debate on the subject in the Argyle settlement, three speakers to a side. In the general discussion following the debate it appears that there were three against the field. (Lögberg, June 18, 1890).

Outstanding woman suffrage leaders in the Icelandic community was Margret Benedictsson. In her publishing work she had the generous assistance and support of her husband.



Margret Benedictsson was born in Iceland, in 1866. At the age of thirteen she had to fend for herself. In 1887 she emigrated to America, taking up residence first in North Dakota, but moving shortly to Manitoba. She earned her way to study at Bathgate College, North Dakota, and in Winnipeg she took evening classes at business college, where she learned shorthand and typing.

In 1892, Margret was married to Sigfus B. Benedictsson, later well-known writer and publisher in the Icelandic community. Their home was at first in Winnipeg, then at Hecla Island for three years, then at Selkirk, till 1902, when they moved to Winnipeg.

Margret Benedictsson was by temperament fitted for her role as suffrage worker. As a child she was possessed by wonder and admiration as she read the story of Jon Sigurdsson's struggle for freedom, and "sorrowful and angered" she read stories of oppressed people, unhappily married women and unfortunate girls. "This kindled an unquenchable desire to break all chains." (Margret J. Benedictsson: *Freyja*, Vol. VIII-2, 1904). Later she was to read about Lucy Stone, Elizabeth Stanton, and many others doing battle for woman's rights, and to make their personal acquaintance through correspondence. Mrs. Stanton was her ideal, but she carried on a sporadic correspondence with Dr. Stowe-Gullen, the leader of the Ontario movement.

Sigfus Benedictsson set up a printing press in Selkirk, 1898, and husband and wife commenced the publication of *Freyja*, "the only woman suffrage paper published in Canada". (Sigfus B. Benedictsson: Private letter, August 5, 1946.) Frugal living made possible

the repayment in a few years of a loan raised at this time.

To the public, Margret was the editor of *Freyja*. Her editorial work and writing was done chiefly in the evening, and late at night. Her household required attention and, moreover, both husband and wife were extremely hospitable, and there was a constant stream of visitors. Also, many meetings, including those of the Verse-making Club (*Hagyrðingafélagið*), were held at their home.

*Freyja*, a forty page monthly, is to be rated a literary magazine as well as a woman suffrage journal. Featured were serial stories appropriate to the policy of the magazine; biographical sketches of prominent people, such as Herbert Spencer and Henrik Ibsen; poetry of a high order, including poems by Stephan G. Stephansson, Kristinn Stefansson, Sig. Jul. Johanneson, Th. Th. Thorsteinsson and Magnus Markusson; literary reviews, and a children's corner.

The struggle was to convert many women as well as men to the cause, but through *Freyja*, public lectures in in the Icelandic settlements, and personal contact, the work progressed. Dr. Amelia Youmans, active in the campaign in Winnipeg centering on 1893, had left shortly after that date. For some years at the turn of the century the Icelandic suffrage leaders were alone in carrying on a sustained campaign in Manitoba, but then Nellie McClung began her spectacular work.

In 1908, Margret Benedictsson founded an Icelandic Woman Suffrage association *Tilraun* (Endeavor) and in 1910 *Sigurvön* (Hope of Victory) was founded at Gimli. At Shoal Lake strong woman suffrage leadership in a

local women's society made the formation of a new organization unnecessary.

The Canadian Suffrage Association recognized Margret Benedicsson's work in inviting her to attend the quinquennial convention of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance in Toronto, 1909, and their own annual convention immediately following, but lack of funds prevented her going. Several letters and articles by her appeared in United States publications, including *Progress*, *The Eugenics of America*, the *Light Bearer*, and the *Women's Standard and Delineator*.

Icelandic suffrage leaders co-operated with other organizations in circulating petitions and sending deputations to appear before the government. About 1910, two petitions circulated in the Icelandic communities in the Province were presented at the Legislative Buildings.

*Freyja* was published in Winnipeg

1902 to 1910. In 1910, failing eyesight compelled Margret Benedicsson to relinquish publication.

Manitoba was the first province in the Dominion to grant the franchise to women. The strongly organized Manitoba Political Equality League, with Mrs. A. V. Thomas as president, was formed in 1913, and about the same time Mrs. Nellie McClung was prominently in the picture. The Norris government brought down the suffrage measure. "Third reading on January 27 was a historic occasion; the oldest member of the House declared he had never seen anything like it in his life. Galleries were filled to overflowing with eager and excited women. Third reading was moved by Acting Premier Thomas H. Johnson, son of an Icelandic suffrage pioneer. Johnson gave a lengthy supporting speech." (Catherine Lyle Cleverdon: *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada*, University of Toronto Press, 1950. p. 64.)

**Alderman Victor B. Anderson**, secretary treasurer of the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council, which position he has held since 1945, has been chosen chairman of the Manitoba executive committee of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.

Alderman Anderson has served on the Winnipeg City Council since 1932, with the exception of one term, and during his tenure of office he has been chairman of the following committees: Public Works, Legislation and Personnel, Welfare Committee, Housing, and the Auditorium Commission. Alderman Anderson has also served for about 15 years on the Winnipeg General Hospital Board.

## T.C.A. BEAUTY QUEEN

**Miss Shirley Eyolfson**, of Trans Canada Airlines engineering department was elected T.C.A. Beauty Queen at the 11th annual T.C.A. Recreation Association picnic on July 11th at Winnipeg Beach.

Shirley Vilma Gudrun is the daughter of Oscar and Palina Eyolfson of Lundar, Man., and granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vigfus J. Guttormsson.



Average monthly wages of male farm help were highest at mid-May in Saskatchewan at \$122 with board and in British Columbia at \$160 without board, and lowest in the Maritimes at \$87 with board and \$115 without board.

## IN THE NEWS

### HOME ON FURLOUGH



**Lilja M. Guttormsson**

Miss Lilja M. Guttormsson, who since 1949 has been with the Canadian Legation in Oslo, Norway, came back to Canada on furlough in July and is returning to Oslo late in September. Lilja is the daughter of Johanna and the late Joseph Guttormsson who resided in Arborg and the Geysir district. Before her appointment to the diplomatic service Miss Guttormsson was employed in the Winnipeg office of the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

Canada's Minister to Norway, His Excellency John Watkins, who formerly was on the staff of the University of Manitoba and has a fair grasp of Icelandic, is also Minister to Iceland. One of Miss Guttormsson's main duties is to translate from Icelandic to English and vice versa. She also does

considerable clerical work in the legation.

Lilja has visited Iceland, a trip she found both pleasant and profitable, several European countries and intends to travel to Spain and Portugal next summer.



### PROMOTED

Dr. Richard Beck, for several years professor of Scandinavian Languages and Literature at the University of North Dakota, this term took over new duties as director of all language studies, both classic and modern, at that university.

He will supervise the work of three teachers in the Romance Languages (French and Spanish), two in German, and one in the classic languages.

Dr. Beck will continue to teach Scandinavian Languages and Literature himself.



### FROM A BRITISH READER

Two women who reside in England have been subscribers to the magazine for a number of years. Last spring one of them had occasion to take three months leave of absence in order to visit the U.S.A. and Canada on public health matters and the other one accompanied her. Their schedule permitted "three precious days in Winnipeg". On their return to England one of them wrote in part as follows:

"It may appear odd to an Icelandic Canadian that we Britishers should read the I.C., if not from cover to cover, at least very thoroughly, and with the liveliest interest, particularly the leaders which often show us how sim-

ilar we are in outlook, and also articles dealing with the struggles of the early settlers. These latter fill us with a warm glow of admiration; the writer of this message especially, being a creature of weak will and little physical endurance, is continually filled with a shame-faced conviction that she would never have 'made the grade' with the gallant women of those days. We also look at the photographs of the young people, and our re-action is: "What a good-looking, attractive, and open-faced race they are". This, in many years, is all we knew of the human Icelandic Canadian . . .

"There is no doubt at all that, after our too brief sojourn in Winnipeg, we two British women will welcome our copies of the I.C. with an even better understanding of the contents, and with an ever increasing sense of friendship with those for whom it is initially published.

—July, 1953

G. Minna Davis



Enid Edwards reached the highest standards yet attained at Calgary Musical festival this spring. Enid, playing in the open modern piano class, charmed the adjudicators with her delicate ability to change from dynamic drive to elusive qualities in Kabelesky Sonata No. 3. Mr. Hubble paid tribute to her physical resources in holding high standards through a long period of hard playing. Enid was awarded 89 marks and won the Mr. and Mrs. A. I. Schumiatcher trophy.

Miss Edwards, a pupil of Gladys McKelvin Egbert, has won numerous honors for her musical endeavors in Calgary. Among her awards are several associate studios medals for outstand-

ing marks at the Royal schools of Music and Royal Conservatory of Music examination.

Enid Edwards has her L.R.S.M. and



Enid Edwards

recently left for further study at the Royal Academy of Music, London, England.

Enid is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gwilym Edwards of Calgary, Alta., and a grand daughter of the late Hinrik and Oddny Johnson formerly of Ebor, Man.



Since 1949, July has displaced June as the most popular month for marriages in Canada. In 1953, there were a record 17,602 marriages in July, close to 50% more than the 11,873 marriages registered in June.

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## CORRECTION

In the last issue of the magazine on page 18 left column there is a misprint in the list of names "Gudmundur Johannsson" should read: Gudvardur Johannsson.



## A Trip to Iceland

(Continued from Page 23)

vited by the president and his wife to Bessastaðir, the home of homes in Iceland—a marvelous location with a grand view in all directions, the place itself rich and varied in history. The president, in his address of welcome, dealt with some of the brighter aspects of that history, reminding us of the school at Bessastaðir in the first half of the last century and all the distinguished men who had either worked at the school or received their education there. "Here Sveinbjörn Egilsson", he said, "translated Homer and these famous stanzas, so often quoted as if they were from the Poetic Edda:

Römm er sú taug,  
er rekka dregur  
föðurtúna til.\*

Our visit to Iceland had proved the truth of these words, and he hoped that such visits would be continued in the future.

Several years ago Ásgeir Ásgeirsson travelled through some of the Icelandic communities in the United States and Canada where he gave lectures on Iceland. Sveinn Björnsson, the late president, had never visited the

Icelandic settlements on this continent but he had come to know the Western Icelanders through their participation in the establishment of the Icelandic Steamship Company, an undertaking, which nobody understood better or appreciated more highly than he, being himself the prime mover of this national enterprise.

I believe that we are very fortunate in enjoying the full sympathy of the two first presidents of Iceland, acquired through their own experience and contacts with our people.

It so happens that the first letter I received from Iceland after returning to Winnipeg this summer came from Dóra Þórhallsdóttir, the president's wife. In it she asks me to bring greetings to my fellow-travellers. I therefore take this opportunity to convey to them her message, which is as follows (in my translation): "Before me is a lovely flowerbasket filled with beautiful roses—a gift from the visiting "Vestur-Íslendingar". We heartily thank them for the gift and warm sentiments it expresses and ask you to convey our thanks and greetings to them. You were dear and welcome guests and everyone was delighted at the success of this visit.

The weather continues ideal, sunny and warm day after day, and we here in the countryside enjoy it to the full."

We had now been five days in Iceland and on the following day before we separated we all met at the home of my mother, Laufey Vilhjálmsdóttir, in Reykjavík. And there Mrs. Anna Matthieson of Vancouver, who had been delayed a week waiting for her

\*The whole verse reads like this:

Leika landmunir  
lýða sonum,  
hveim er fúss er fara.  
Römm er sú taug,  
er rekka dregur  
föðurtúna til.

And it is a translation or a paraphrase of Ovid's Epist. ex Ponto, I., III., 35-36:

nescioqua natale solum dulcedine cunctos  
ducit et inmemores non sinit esse sui.

In prose translation (A. L. Wheeler in The Loeb Classical Library): By what sweet charm I know not the native land draws all men nor allows them to forget her.

passport, joined the group to the applause of everybody present.

In the evening most of us went to the National Theatre to hear Verdi's **La Traviata**, performed by Icelandic singers (Guðmundur Jónsson, Einar Kristjánsson, etc.) and one guest artist, Hjordis Schymberg of the Royal Swedish Opera House in Stockholm.

Next day, the 17th of June, the National day of Iceland, everybody stayed with their friends taking part in the festivities as they saw fit. The weather was beautiful and the streets of Reykjavík were swarming with people, especially in the evening when the dancing began to the music of three bands.

After the 17th of June the group disbanded and the members of the party scattered, each turning to his own pursuits. I stayed most of the time in Reykjavík and hardly saw or heard anything of my comrades for a whole month.

On the 19th of July some of us met at Arnarstapi (Eagle hill) in Skagafjörður, when Stephan G. Stephansson's monument was unveiled on a beautiful day, before a large gathering. It gave us great satisfaction to be able to be present on this occasion, and I know that the executive-committee made a special effort to have the monument finished and unveiled before we left. For a closer account of this memorable event I refer to an article dealing with the unveiling published elsewhere in this issue of the Icelandic Canadian.

After the unveiling we were invited by the committee to supper at Varmahlíð, where we left later in the evening with best wishes for our trip and special greeting from Skagafjörður and Skagfirðingar to all Icel. in the West.

In the middle of the week, which happened to be the last one whether we liked it or not, most of us were back in Reykjavík again, for we had chosen Thursday to go to Þingvellir as guests of the Þingvalla committee. The weather turned out to be excellent, warm and bright, and Þingvellir was at its very best. At dinner in the Valhöll hotel Júi Jónsson gave a very interesting and encouraging speech. Hákon Bjarnason, president of the Icelandic Reforestation Society asked us to bring a message of thanks to the Icelandic National League for a sum of money the League had given to the society to be used for the planting of trees at Þingvellir. The speaker told us that his society in cooperation with the Þingvalla-committee had chosen a special plot within the National Park at Þingvelli which had been dedicated to the Icelanders in America. Three thousand trees had already been planted this spring and more are to be planted in the future.

On the way to Reykjavík we visited Reykjalundur, a rehabilitation centre for T. B. patients, built and run mostly by the patients themselves, an institution, which is considered to be one of the best of its kind anywhere. Mrs. Margaret Stephensen, who visited Reykjalundur in 1949 wrote an interesting article on her visit, to which I would like to refer (*The Icel. Can.*, vol. 8, no 2).

In the evening we were the guests of Félag Vestur-Íslendinga (The Society of Western Icelanders). Everyone took along his relatives and friends, a meeting of some 200 people. And you felt like you had been rolling a snowball in the thaw, the ball getting bigger and bigger all the time!

Hálfdan Eiríksson was the chairman.

The speakers were Pétur Sigurðsson, Mrs. Ástríður Eggertsdóttir and Þórarinn Víkingur. Mrs. Hanna Bjarnadóttir gave a recital of Icelandic songs. Kjartan Ólafsson, president of Iðunn, the Rhymers' Society, sang a ballad in the old style and brought a special greeting from his society to the Icelandic oldtimers in America.

A very beautiful color-film of Iceland was presented by Vigfús Sigurgeirsson.

Gísli Guðmundsson, an earlier resident of the Manitoba Inter-lake area, now a custom officer in Reykjavík gave a most appropriate toast to the prairies and the lakes, turning the nostalgic mind in the opposite direction.

It goes without saying that the leader of the group rose on the trip to every occasion to thank to the best of his ability for the many receptions and all the kindness shown to us during our stay in Iceland. But for this evening he reserved the right to make a very short speech, and after having said a few words of gratitude he called on some of his fellow-travellers to speak. At least four gave a good response, Mrs. Ásta Norman of Point Roberts, Steindór Jakobsson of Winnipeg, Jón Björnsson of Sauðárkrúkur in Iceland (who joined the group on the return journey to see his son, Dr. Björn Jónsson in Benito, Man.) and Mrs. Emma von Renesse from Årborg, who crowned the program with a moving account of her longing to go to Iceland, which she had left fifty-nine years before at the age of ten. It would be impossible to repeat her sentiments, for now they exist as a state of mind, a mood, created in a few short moments and kept after-

wards in a long memory of all those present.

The night before we left, the Icelandic radio broadcasted an interview with 5 members of the group, and during my stay I gave two lectures over the radio on the Icelandic settlements in America, their institutions and interests.

We left Iceland for New York at midnight July 26th in fine weather and were seen off at the airport by twice as many people as were there to receive us when we came 6½ weeks before.

In this group of thirty-eight people, only seven were not originally born in Iceland and came there for the first time. Twenty-eight were from Canada and ten from the United States. There were twenty-seven women and ten men. The average age was sixty years, the youngest participant being nineteen years old, the oldest eighty-three. Five are still in Iceland, but are expected to return in the fall. One of the women left Iceland seventy-six years ago when she was two years old, another had not been there for seventy years. Three men left Iceland together forty years ago and came back now, two of them for the first time.

I have only commented on what took place while the whole group was together but what happened to each individual member for five weeks after we separated, he would have to relate himself.

This summer has been one of the best in Iceland for years, mild and bright with heavy growth of grass and large crops of hay and other vegetables. The herring, the most mysterious fish in the sea, which almost seemed to have abandoned the shores of Iceland for a long period has appeared again,

at least to some extent, the catch this time mostly being salted for export. I once came to Siglufjörður this summer, the main centre of the herring industry in Iceland, and saw the herring being salted by long rows of "sildar-stúlkur" herring-girls, a lively sight on a sunny day, I can assure you.

Another trip I made by plane to Hellisandur on Snæfellsnes and walked from there across the peninsula west of Snæfellsjökull, a glacier and an extinct volcano, south to Malarrið. That was a very pleasant and impressive walk over lava fields and grassy hills with the picturesque glacier on the one hand and the vast ocean on the other.

But what about the future? Is there interest in making such trips to Iceland a yearly or perhaps a biennial event? The trip we made this summer was really an experiment to explore the possibilities for the future. My feeling is that there should be another trip next summer with an exchange group from Iceland. The plane should fly direct between Winnipeg and Reykjavík (via Gander or Goose

Bay). If fifty passengers were going we should try to get at least twenty young people on each side. In that way Icelandic families here and in Iceland would exchange young people say for one month and the other month they would go on a tour with the rest of the people through Iceland and part of America respectively.

We are living in a small world and we happen to belong directly or indirectly to one of the smallest families on the earth, the Icelandic family, whose pride and privilege it is to trace and cherish relationship and common background, to take a greater interest in the individual than in the mass and to feel more in ages than in a few fleeting moments. This is something inbred and deeply rooted in the Icelandic character, a virtue, which we must cultivate in ourselves whether we live in Iceland or America. And I believe that one of the best ways to do this is to encourage and stimulate every kind of exchange between individuals of the widely spread Icelandic family.

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## Trinidad

(Continued from Page 28)

customed finds the cost of these imported foodstuffs fairly high. However there are compensatory features. Bananas, pineapples, and a host of other tropical fruits are very cheap. The cost of rum is \$1.70 a twenty-six ounce bottle, in British West Indies currency, which is around \$1.00 in Canadian money. Other liquors as well cost half the price they do in Canada, and local cigarettes, which are not too bad, cost only .15 in Canadian money for a pack of twenty.

### PORT-OF-SPAIN

Port-of-Spain, the capital of Trinidad, is a city with a population of 120,000, situated on the Gulf of Paria and lying 700 miles north of the equator. The commercial section is located on a flat area or plateau bordering the Gulf, and is surrounded by hills and valleys in which the residential areas are located. In the centre of Port-of-Spain is a huge Savannah, a lush green park containing a race track, cricket field, and beautiful botanical gardens.



This at one time formed the spacious grounds of an old plantation.

The streets in the downtown section are very narrow, and crowded with beggars, donkey carts, and native taxis. Driving a car is precarious, as very few abide by the laws of the road. There is one traffic light in Port-of-Spain, which is more of a hazard than

Spain are quaint and old, and only one or two could be termed modern. Shop signs can be seen in English, Chinese, Spanish, Hindustani, and Hollywood slang. The merchandise displayed is very limited as compared to our Canadian stores, and is largely imported from Europe as the exchange rates on American and Canadian goods



**View of Maracas Beach, 10 miles from Port-of-Spain**

a help, because when proceeding on the green light you have a very false sense of safety from collision with cars emerging from the other direction. The light is well-known for the frequency with which it is out of order as a result of motorists colliding with the post on which it is mounted. On most corners the traffic is directed by policemen who stand perspiring in the tropical sun, attired in white helmet, grey shirt, blue serge shorts, and heavy puttees.

The stores in downtown Port-of-

Spain are prohibitive. Shipments of goods are very unreliable, as was illustrated last December when a boatload of beautiful Christmas trees arrived from Tasmania in the middle of January. The service in the stores is exceedingly slow and inefficient—the clerks are generally dull and have little notion of what they are selling. When you have finally made a purchase, it is necessary that the price and change be checked by the manager, who is seldom immediately available. Then the purchase has to be wrapped, even

though it be a spool of thread as there are few paper bags—and this takes place in the other end of the store. Consequently shopping in Port-of-Spain is a little trying.

Recreational outlets are quite varied. There are moving picture theatres, where you may smoke anywhere at will, despite the fact that the construction of the building will be frame and hardly fireproof. Generally the white people sit upstairs, coloured downstairs, although this is by custom and not through any particular ruling of the management. The films appear at a later date in Trinidad than in most Canadian or American cities. Also there are recitals, amateur theatricals, local exhibitions of art, handicraft, horticulture. Social clubs are numerous, such as the Trinidad Country Club, the St. Clair Club, the Yatch Club, the Portuguese Club, a Chinese Association, an India Club a Syrian Club, a Canadian Women's Club, a St. Andrews Society, and a Bolivarian Society.

### SPORTS IN TRINIDAD

The chief sport in Trinidad is cricket which flourishes from January to June. During these months, there is usually a match held between a selected West Indian team and a visiting team from another country such as Australia, India or England. It is as enthusiastically followed as football or hockey in Western Canada. In Port-of-Spain, most business houses allow their staff time off to spend alternate afternoons viewing the match which may last for about two weeks. In addition to these international matches, inter-island matches excite almost as much interest. The Islanders' love of cricket is illustrated by the sight of the

plantation workers of the small villages throughout the Island engaging in the Sunday cricket match, resplendent in the same white cricket uniforms that are worn in England or Australia.

In addition to cricket, the usual sports of golf, tennis, swimming and boating are popular. The Trinidadian and the foreign residents alike love to spend a Sunday at one of the neighboring beaches. The balmy months for bathing are from January to April, and during this period it is difficult to visualize the lake resorts of Western Canada blanketed under a layer of frost and snow.

No description of sporting life in Trinidad would be complete without mentioning the Islander's love of betting on good horse flesh. Racing meets are held four times a year, and an amazingly large amount of money changes hands. Even the poorest worker scrapes together a few dollars for the occasion, and displays an amazing knowledge of the horses. The animals are usually imported by local business and professional people who keep stables on the island and also participate in numerous meets held in adjoining colonies such as British Guiana, Barbados, and Tobago.

### TOBAGO

Trinidad cannot be described without mention being made of the neighboring island of Tobago, which according to local sources, was the home of the legendary Robinson Crusoe. It lies some fifteen miles off the north-east coast of Trinidad, and is approximately twenty-six miles long and seven miles wide. It boasts a cooler climate than Trinidad owing to its location directly in the path of the Trade Winds. These winds made

Tobago a strategic naval base during the time of the Spanish Main. This tiny tropical isle, with its magnificent natural harbors, was bitterly fought over by Dutch, French and English forces. Despite her stormy past, Tobago stands today, peaceful and serene, occupied by a population of some thirty-thousand negroes and a handful of whites. With the exception of those engaged in the few tourist resorts, the population is dependent upon agriculture and stock raising. The principal centre and port of Scarborough has remained essentially unchanged during the last century, and indeed if the automobiles were removed from the streets and a few ships in the harbor replaced by sailing schooners, one could easily visualize the Scarborough which existed at the time of the abolition of slavery.

In addition to its natural scenery, Tobago is famous for the beauty of its coral reef and Bird of Paradise Island. The reef stretches along the southwestern section of the island about half a mile from shore. The coral growth has formed magnificent miniature underwater caverns which are inhabited by thousands of small fish of every color and shape imaginable. By means of breathing tubes and close fitting goggles, one can float on the surface of the water over the reef and view a scene that is beyond description. The Bird of Paradise Island is the only place in the Western Hemisphere where the beautiful Birds of Paradise can be viewed in their natural state. They were imported from New Guinea in 1909, and though they are shy and difficult to find, the sight of one of these stately birds is ample compensation for the effort involved.

Attractions in Tobago such as the

foregoing, together with its natural beauty and excellent bathing and climate, have combined to make the Island one of the newly found tourist attractions of the West Indies.

### THE CARNIVAL

To return to Trinidad, though reluctantly, the annual Carnival is worthy of description. It takes place on the Monday and Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday in February. Business in Port-of-Spain closes down, and for many Carnival consists of forty-eight hours of sleepless revelry. For two days, crowds throng the streets and follow the steel bands, doing the "jump-up" which consists of a rhythmic, shuffling, uneven step. The rhythm pounded out on the steel drums has a hypnotic effect, and everyone, including bystanders, are soon caught up by the music. Participants, white and coloured alike, dress very elaborately, in various guises, and form into "bands", each of which represents some theme, such as King Arthur's Court, the Elizabethans, North American Indians and so on. All contestants parade in the Savannah before the Judges at the conclusion of the carnival, where prizes are presented for the best bands and individual costumes, and a Carnival Queen is chosen. The Carnival is unique to Trinidad, and has been compared by visiting Americans to the famous Mardi Gras of New Orleans.

The steel band, peculiar to Trinidad, originated after the outbreak of the last World War, and at the present time there are more than one-hundred and fifty on the island. The instrument used, the steel drum, was first played by negro boys in an endeavor to produce music without having to buy instruments. The steel drums con-

sist of nothing more than discarded oil drums cut down to various sizes. The bottom of the drum is inverted, hammered into shape, and ingeniously tuned with the use of heat to as many as thirty-two notes. The instruments are played with rubber tipped sticks, and have sufficient range to play anything from a road march to a classical symphony. The music is quite unlike that produced by any other instrument and has been compared to the combination of a xylophone and soft drum. In the past few years a softer tonal effect has been produced, and many believe that the steel drum will eventually take its place in the symphony orchestra. Steel bands have played in the United States and once in England, and been very enthusiastically received. Calypso singing as well had its origin in Trinidad some years ago.

### HOME LIFE

Homes in Trinidad are of two distinct types, the older Spanish estate tropical house, elevated and rambling, and the more modern ranch style. There are many windows, kept open all the time for the sake of the breeze. Homes are rather sparsely furnished, and the floors are usually wood or a colored cement tile which is not unattractive. Utilities are expensive but available. A building at the rear houses the servants. The gardens are lovely, and usually contain beautiful flowering hedges, such as the poinsetta which blossoms in December. In the yard there may be found orange, grapefruit, lime trees, and banana plants, to mention a few. There are gardenia bushes with their wonderful fragrance which is almost overpowering. There are anthurium lilies, which may be compared to our calla lilies,

except that they are larger, come in different shades of color, and they are exquisite. Every variety of orchid can be grown with ease.

Most better-class families have two or more servants, usually a cook, laundress, maid, and "nanny" if there are children. In addition, there is a yard boy who does the floors and tends the garden, and he is invariably an East Indian who has a natural love for the land. Servants are paid anywhere from \$20 to \$30 a month in British West Indies currency, which would be \$12 to \$17 in Canadian money. Negroes make the best household servants, with their sense of humor and loyalty to those they like. Trinidad is a land of superstition, and it is puzzling to have servants refuse to open the refrigerator door or wash the dishes anytime during the day after ironing, for fear of "catching a draft" as they have become "heated" from the ironing. Some of them are painfully slow, but by and large, when properly trained, they give good service. They have a natural love for children, and look after them well, being blessed with a tremendous amount of patience.

Beyond the lines of employment, there is little social mixing between the coloured peoples and the whites. The negroes and East Indians, who form the bulk of the coloured population, are quite unlike, in physique and temperament. The negro is well built in contrast to the Indian, is an enormous eater, and spends almost all he earns on his food, drink and clothes. He has an easy-going attitude with a very cheery disposition and excellent sense of humor. The Indian on the other hand is very contemplative and calculating, but quick to learn.



He is exceedingly thrifty, and is said to save half of what he earns, regardless of how much that may be. He is very clannish and appears lacking in the sense of humor and musical capabilities which distinguish his negro brethren. Generally speaking, the colony is dependent upon the East Indian for raising rice and other local foods, and with his passion for owning land, he forms the largest land owning group in the colony. On the other hand the negro usually fills the various and sundry classes of employment including fishing, working on large plantations, and heavy forms of labor in the oil fields and such like.

The standard of living of the bulk of the native population at first seems appallingly low, since they live in what appears to be rather squalid palm-thatched huts, and subsist on a diet of rice, a little local vegetable or fruit, supplemented by small amounts of fresh fish or salted meat and fish. However, on closer inspection, it becomes apparent that the huts are relatively clean. There is a surprising lack of disease, and in general, the people appear healthy and properly nourished. The majority are without steady employment, and live a day to day existence. Unlike life in northern climes, they are able to manage with scarcely any clothing and no roof over their heads, and there is always readily available sufficient fruit and vegetables to sustain life. Among the

poorer class, family life is a little unsettled—for the most part a couple will not bother taking the marriage vows, and should they tire of one another they simply part and each pairs off elsewhere. The system does not seem to work too badly, and any offspring do not suffer any apparent disadvantage. They stay with the mother and are adopted by her next husband with very little fuss. Very frequently the women work to support the family, husband and all, when he is in the picture, and seem to be quite accepting of this state of affairs.

The Island of Trinidad, as it stands today, is unique in that it is the result of the mixing of many bloods and the intermingling of people from every major race and every level of society. The people, the climate, the lack of seasons, the tropical growth combine to make Trinidad a land vastly different from our native Manitoba and an Island of never-ending interests.

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Ed. Note. The above is a letter sent to The Icelandic Canadian at the request of the Board. Both the author and her husband, Douglas Warren Hilland are from Manitoba. Ruth is the Daughter of Judge W. J. Lindal and Douglas, of Irish descent, hails from Portage la Prairie. He is a graduate in law from the University of Manitoba and at present is manager of the Land and Lease Department of Dominion Oils Ltd. in Trinidad. Ruth holds a B.A. degree and Diploma in Social Work from Manitoba University. They have one son, born in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, in January of this year.

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Canadians enjoy one of the lowest rates for electric service in the world. In the U.S. the average revenue per kilowatt hour sold to residential customers was 2.81 cents in 1951 as against 1.65 cents in Canada, while commercial and industrial sales averaged

1.4 cents per kilowatt hour in the U.S. as compared with 0.6 cents in Canada.

o o o

In the First half of 1953, there were three births for every death in Canada.

**PIONEER MOTHER** (Continued from Page 31)

rose to her lips. He returned with two fat drakes which he hung to the children's saddle. "We'll have these for supper tonight," he said. Hannah exclaimed over the beauty of the iridescent feathers and stroked the soft down on the breasts. Edwards told her that he had a big bag of such feathers at home and promised her a warm bed for the winter.

After that the little party was silent, until at long last Edward said, "It's just around the next bend." Mary leaned forward in her saddle, and even Julia opened her sleepy eyes. A minute later they rode into a clearing at the edge of a small creek. The cabin stood on a little rise of ground, on one side was natural meadow on the other a forest of stumps. Behind rose the giant trees, maple, oak and beech. At the front of the house stood a single walnut tree casting its shade over the roof.

Edward called "Neddy", but there was no answering hail, only the echo replying from the forest beyond the meadow. No feather of smoke rose from the little house in front of them. He quickened his pace, picking his way through the stumps to the door. Swinging it open, he stepped inside, still calling "Neddy".

Mary got down from her horse with the baby in her arms and stopped long enough to tether the little girl's horse to one of the stumps. By the time she had reached the door he had come out again. "He's not here."

The words were a cry of despair. Suddenly he looked gaunt and old. Her own agony of the past two days was reflected in his eyes, her own agony multiplied a hundred fold because of his added sense of guilt. She had anticipated this moment from the time he had told her that Neddy had

been left behind; he had never once doubted that their son was safe.

She looked beyond him into the vabin. She saw the rough logs carefully chinked with moss and clay, the stone fire place, the table and benches and the bed frame on one side of the room—all hewed from the forest—the home built for her by her husband and son. The fire on the hearth was only a heap of cold ashes. And then on the table she saw the little pewter cup filled with fringed gentians. It had been placed there by a boy who remembered how his mother loved pretty things. Two of the flowers had fallen on the floor, she bent and picked them up. They were just beginning to wither. "Look", she said showing them to Edward, "he dropped these here just a while ago. He has been here today."

She saw the flicker of hope return to his face. "I'll go up to the spring and look around. The cow's gone too."

"Wait just a minute." She realized that he needed her much more now than the children did.

While he was untying his gun from the saddle, she lifted the two little girls down from their chairs, placed the baby in Hannah's arms and told them to wait there at the house until she came back.

The father and mother walked down a narrow path to a place where a little spring came bubbling out of the ground at the edge of the meadow. Here there were footprints in the mud, moccasined footprints, only one set left by the feet of a boy. Edward lifted his hand to his mouth and called again, "Neddy!"

Twice the name echoed back to them from the silent arches of the trees, the third time they thought they heard an answering hail. Once more

the father called, and this time the answer came distinctly, "Here, father."

The two stood breathless, listening. A large animal was crashing through the underbrush. Edward raised his gun and lowered it again as the mild face of a cow appeared through the trees. Behind her Mary caught the first glimpse of her son, or could it be Neddy? Gone forever were the dimpled cheeks and reddish curls. In his place was this solemn young woodsman clad in leather leggings and moccasins. The upper part of his body was tanned like an Indians. The sandy hair had been cropped close, the eyes set in the thin freckled face were alert and self-confident. In the crook of his arm he carried a gun. When he saw his mother he laid it carefully on the log beside the spring and only then did he run into her outstretched arms. She clung to him sobbing.

"Young man, you've given your mother a bad scare." Now that his son was safe, Edward was once more in command of his family and himself. "I told you that you were not to go into the woods."

"I'm sorry sir." Neddy was the young recruit explaining to a sympathetic superior officer. "When I came out after cleaning the house this morning, I found Daisy", indicating the cow, "had broken her rope and headed for the woods. I had to go after her. I took the gun. She hadn't gone far, but I had to wait, because", here Daisy lifted her head and moo-ed loudly. The underbrush stirred and from the spot where Neddy had emerged a smaller animal staggered forth, a calf with a white star on its forehead like its mother and long unsteady legs. The three of them watched it wobble over to its mother and start nuzzling for food.

"Isn't it a beauty. A heifer too."

Mary dried her eyes and managed to laugh. "I was never gladder to see anyone", she said. "I was certain something dreadful had happened to you."

"What could happen to me here?"

"Oh, Indians, wild animals."

The child, who a moment before had been resting his head against his mother's shoulders drew away from her surprised and indignant. "How silly! There's been no Indian trouble here for over a hundred years, and there's no danger from bears or wolves this time of year. Besides I can take care of myself." She watched him walk over and pick up the gun from the log. He handled it with a skill acquired by experience. Childhood on the frontier is of necessity short, and this son of hers was already in some ways a man.

Edward laid his hand on his son's shoulder. "Your mother's been fretting for the past three days," he said, "but I knew you could look after yourself." The two stood there side by side smiling indulgently over a woman's weakness. Mary, remembering Edward's panic back there at the house and pressure of a boy's arm about her neck, knew that even these two had their moments of weakness. They needed her and she would not fail them.

\* This story as related by Helen Sigurdson, wife of Dr. L. A. Sigurdson of Winnipeg, is fictionalized history based upon an actual event which took place during the trek of the United Empire Loyalists from the rebellious Thirteen Colonies to what is now Ontario. The author is a direct descendant of the Pioneer Woman whose name was Elizabeth McMichael. The incident around which the story centres has its counterparts in most of the pioneer Icelandic settlements, once again proving that in toil, anxiety, suffering, heroism and ultimate victory the lot of all the pioneers had much in common. —Ed.

## CANADA'S INTERNAL MIGRATIONS

One symptom of the youth and expansion of Canada is the number of native born citizens who have moved from the provinces of their birth to other parts of the country. The 1951 census shows that 12% of Canada's native born population were living outside the provinces in which they were born. This means that of the 11,949,518 citizens who were Canadians by birth, 1,412,496 of them had moved away from their home provinces to establish themselves elsewhere.

The people of Quebec showed the least tendency to move to another province as only 5% left the province of their birth. Ontarians, also, tend to stay put: 92% of those born in that province remained there. British Columbians hold a close third place at 91%. Saskatchewan, on the other hand, had lost 34% of its native-born to other provinces.

The most attractive provinces to Canadians on the move are Ontario and British Columbia. Ontario attracted 410,000 from the other provinces, and British Columbia, 359,300.

Ontario draws its incoming Canadians mostly from the Maritimes and Quebec, whereas the biggest flow from the prairies is to British Columbia. When Ontarians leave home, they go mostly to Quebec. And when the British Columbians get restless, they wind up mainly in Ontario or in Alberta. . . .

## FROM COOK TO PLANT MANAGER

Mr. Walter Schlegel, a master sausage maker, is at present manager of a co-operative cold storage plant in Arborg, Manitoba. He came to Canada in 1951, and upon arrival learned

that chefs were in demand. He decided, therefore, to enter the cooking profession and accepted employment with a large catering firm as third cook. Within three months he was promoted to head chef. His financial status having thus improved, he brought his wife and young son to Canada. They travelled about the country re-organizing camp kitchens operated by the firm.

Since the Schlegels wished to settle down, they left the catering firm, and both husband and wife accepted employment as cooks with a mining corporation in British Columbia. Later the Schlegels moved to Winnipeg, where an immigration official obtained for Mr. Schlegel his present position.

Since Mr. Schlegel assumed the management of the plant, the firm has shown a substantial profit. Furthermore, Mr. Schlegel's design for a slaughter house and meat processing plant has been approved and will be adopted in the expansion programme planned for the future.

. . .

## MONTREAL MOUNTAINEERS

Mountaineering in Canada is gaining popularity. The growing interest in this sport is due to the efforts of Mr. Julien Labedan, a veteran climber of the French Pyrenees and a former member of the French Alpine Club.

Mr. Labedan organized the Canadian Mountain Club at Montreal in 1946. With the assistance of three experienced climbers, he trained twenty Canadians into a team of competent Alpinists. The Club has at present some sixty-five members, and it is expected that its membership will be increased to 100 by next year.

The Club is now planning its first expedition to the Rocky Mountains.



Three members who will be taking part in the expedition have had previous experience with high mountains.

Mr. Labedan states that the cliffs of the Laurentian Mountains in winter offer the climbers conditions which in other countries would only be found at very high altitudes. His wife is also an experienced mountain climber and both she and the children share Mr. Labedan's enthusiasm for this sport.

#### SUCCESSFUL NEW CAN- ADIAN ARCHITECT

In less than three years, Eberhard Heinrich Zeidler has risen to a position of prominence in a leading Canadian architectural firm.

Mr. Zeidler came to Canada in 1951, and his design for two churches in Peterborough, Ontario, brought him fame and success. He also won a third prize recently in a national architectural contest. The subject of his winning design was a drawing of a modern type house. Not long ago he was placed in charge of his firm's Toronto office and, apart from his regular work he will lecture on design at the University of Toronto.

There were an estimated 215,000 automobile accidents reported in Canada in 1952 in which over 2,500

persons were killed and 60,000 injured.

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Canada was the world's third largest trading country in 1952, and was one of the few leading world traders to increase the volume of both exports and imports in the year. Canada's total trade amounted to \$581 per head of population, a figure only exceeded by New Zealand.



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